

F-2007



THE HOLY QUR-ĀN

WITH

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

AND

EXPLANATORY NOTES, Etc.

PART I.

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Ahmad, the Second Successor of the Promised Messiah, by
Anjuman-i-Taraqqi Islam, Qadian, Punjab, India.*



PRINTED AT THE
ADDISON PRESS, MADRAS.





FOREWORD.

SEEKERS after truth and searchers for guidance! Bless your stars that the Book revealed by God for the good of mankind has been made accessible to you in an easily comprehensible form. It is the Message, yes, the self-same Message, which went forth in sweet Arabic accents from the Cave Hirā, 1,300 years ago, at a time when Cimmerian darkness of irreligion had overspread the entire face of the earth and moral turpitude had blunted the consciousness of sin; and which, again, is repeated to-day in the English language for the guidance of those stragglers who, like their predecessors of 1,300 years ago, are thirsting for truth but suffer from the lack of a guide. O yearners for spiritual life! Here is presented to you the brimful chalice of that life-giving *elixir* which, thirteen centuries back, restored the dead to life, that you may be able to slake your thirst and enjoy the true life. A fool indeed is he who is far away from God and yet considers himself in the land of the living; and ignorant really is one who, though steeped in spiritual darkness, thinks himself to be in the light. Of a truth, he alone is *living* who lives a heavenly life, and none is more lifeless than one who lacks life of the spirit. The dead entombed in graves are decidedly not so defunct as those buried in their living corporeal framework. The sepulchre of earth is certainly not as hideous as the tomb of flesh, because, while the hard earth of the former is immune from the inroads of the devil, the flowing fluid of the latter is subject to the continual rushes of the Evil One. He, of course, is in the light whose heart is illumined by the heavenly light, because the external light cannot avail, unless there is light within. One whose inside is dark will continue to remain in darkness even in the broad daylight. There are many who take pity on the blind, but more pitiable are those whose minds lack spiritual sight. Many there are who take compassion on the deaf, but none takes compassion on those whose minds are closed against truth. Those are really deserving of pity who have minds, but do not understand; who have eyes, but do not see; and who have ears, but do not hear. Such people are little better than irrational animals, because they are unconscious of the life of the spirit which is the real source of all life. Life of the spirit is the kind of life which knows no death. Out of sympathy for such men, we offer this treasure of guidance with utmost regard and affection, hoping that unbiassed minds will surely pay their very best attention to it, and with a sincere mind ponder over its con-

tents. It is sheerly through ignorance that the followers of other faiths, on account of their lack of knowledge, call the Holy Qur-án a useless book, but the real reliable opinion is that which is matured after due deliberation and personal observation and experience. Blind faith is not the characteristic of a wise man. We are positively certain that a careful, unprejudiced study of the Holy Qur-án cannot fail to produce a strongly favourable impression on the minds of a sincere reader. This Charming Book was vouchsafed to the world 1,300 years back, yet life-force flows as resistlessly in every word and phrase to-day as it did at that time. No book on the surface of the earth enjoys the peculiar privilege of ever-lasting life except the Holy Qur-án of Islam. All others have fallen a prey to death and decay ; but this Book is ever yielding rich fruit which is the token of life. Even to-day, men who follow it feel the same thrill of life as did those who acted upon it at the time of its revelation. Know ye lovers of life ! that there is no living book under the vault of heaven except the Holy Qur-án ; there is no living faith under the Sun except Islam ; and there is surely no living prophet in the world, but the Holy Prophet of Arabia or one who gets *his* spirit and becomes completely like-minded with him.

Indeed, it is no easy task to accept the truth. The path leading to truth is honey-combed with pitfalls and very often involves loss of life and property before one can attain to it. There are many a chicken-hearted man, who, although conscious of the truth, cannot openly declare for it for fear of worldly loss or of desertion by the relatives, or of taunts of the friends. But every wise man knows that every gain is attended with a lot of pain. Only he who laboriously tills the earth and sows the seed can hope to reap a harvest. One who refrains from climbing up a fruit-laden tree through fear of thorns cannot taste the fruit thereof. The life of this world is nothing compared with truth. This life is but a drop out of the limitless ocean of life designed for man. What is known as death is only the curtain hanging before the Examination Hall, and everybody knows that real life begins after getting through the examination when the school-days come to an end. Ye truth-loving people ! Ponder over the great truth we place before you and accept it. These noble teachings aim at the happiness of this as well as the next world. They are meant to make man fit for the grand task for which he was born. The Holy Qur-án itself explains the object of its revelation:—" We have not revealed this Book, so that you may get into any sort of harm, material or spiritual ; but on the other hand, it is sent as guidance to those who fear the path of ruin and destruction and seek the right path. It is the word of Him Who created the earth as well as the high heavens, Who shows unqualified mercy to man and is free from all defects. He is established on His seat of supreme sovereignty. Everything in the heavens above and the earth below and even in the intervening space belongs to Him" (XX, 3—7). From this it is clear that the underlying purpose of this Book is to secure for its adherents the happiness of life here as well as hereafter and to further the object of human life ; it should, therefore, be the primary duty of every one to accept it, and we cannot help expressing our firm conviction that if people set aside their prejudice and study it with a clear and receptive mind, they cannot but accept it. Man naturally spurns all obstacles and defies all difficulties that stand in his way of getting to what he believes to be useful to him. Filled with this conviction, we bring out this English Translation of the Holy Qur-án and are sure that a careful reader will, after perusing it, find his attitude towards Islam completely changed. His previous hatred based on false reports will surely be converted into a deep love for it. And this is quite easy with God.

FURTHER PROGRESS OF THE TRANSLATION.

It is yet too early to say anything previously when the Second Part will be out ; but we have every hope that, by the grace of God, we shall be able to publish it in as short a time as possible. Although we are afraid that the Second and Third Parts will take unusually longer time, and we may scarcely be able to publish more than two or three of them in a year, yet we hasten to assure our readers that strenuous efforts will be made to avoid undue delay and to finish the work as soon as possible. When all the thirty Parts have been published, an ample Introduction to the Holy Qur-án will be added, which will be comprehensive exposition of such important matters as require a detailed and lengthy discussion and cannot therefore find room in the notes appended to the Translation. It will then be known to the world that the Holy Qur-án has not been handled by its detractors in a spirit of fairness and justice.

NEED FOR THIS TRANSLATION.

To remove all misgivings as to the necessity for this Translation in the presence of those already published, we should like to say that the English translations, so far published, have been done either by those who were swayed by nothing but religious prejudice and whose object was certainly not the manifestation of truth, but the presentation of a ghastly picture of the Holy Qur-án before the world ; or by those who had no acquaintance worth the name with the Holy Qur-án and the Arabic language, the result being that those translations are too poor reading to afford anything like a real insight into the excellences of Islam. This, of course, has accentuated the need of another translation which may, unlike others, give a life-like portrait of Islam ; and to supply this desideratum this annotated Translation is placed before the reading public. Weak human beings as we are, it is too much to assert that we have risen above the possibility of error in the execution of this work : To err is human and we are no exception. But the method we have adopted has minimised, if not totally done away with, the chance of error. We have not based the translation and notes, and in fact every other matter connected therewith, on current stories and popular tales ; but, on the other hand, our procedure has been to base the meaning of every word first on the corroborative testimony of the Holy Qur-án, and secondly on the context. The same golden rule has been observed in the preparation of notes. Every note first derives its authority from the spirit and tenor of the Holy Qur-án as expressed in various other places. Next to the Holy Qur-án, precedence is given to the information forthcoming from the authentic sayings of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him). After the evidence of the Holy Qur-án itself and that of the traditions, resort has been made to the standard dictionaries of the Arabic language. Last of all, recourse has been taken to the evidence of history which was necessary for the explanation of such verses as referred to some well-known historical events. We have carefully avoided all those baseless tales and unfounded stories which have grievously misled many a translator. Such foolish stories may find room in the folklore, but it will be a decided injustice to thrust them upon the Holy Qur-án, because, far from disclosing the truth, they give rise to childish nonsense and mental confusion. So we have taken scrupulous care to steer clear of all such unworthy stuff, and have

based our translation and explanatory notes first on the Holy Qur-án itself, secondly on the authenticated sayings of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God), thirdly on standard dictionaries, and fourthly on reliable history. This process, we hope, will be a great help towards a right understanding of the Holy Qur-án.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THIS TRANSLATION.

As translation without the original is likely to jeopardise the purity of the text, it is therefore found necessary to give the text along with the translation. This essential feature is conspicuous by its absence in other English translations. Just below the text is given in English characters an exact and clear transliteration of the same, which will, we trust, greatly facilitate the reading of the Holy Qur-án even by those not familiar with the Arabic language. It will also be a radical help to the new converts to Islam who have to learn by heart a portion of the Holy Qur-án to be read in prayers. Lower down the transliteration, there come in order the English translation, the explanatory notes, and a running note on the arrangement of the verses. The last item, which throws in bold relief the marvellously unique arrangement of the verses, one following the other in the most natural sequence, is, as far as we know, the first attempt of its kind. Not only are the other English translations devoid of it, but even the voluminous Arabic commentaries have also ignored this important phase of the work; the dire consequence being that some thoughtless critics have had the audacity to call the Book a rhapsody. Thus, this humble effort of ours will satisfy a crying and long-felt need; and a perusal is sure to convince the reader that the Holy Qur-án is a thoroughly coherent and consistent reading and that every sentence is a gem well set in its place and every subject a pearl exquisitely studded in its own setting. Last of all, at the bottom are found the cross-references, by means of which one can see at a glance the various places where the subject of a certain verse has been dealt with in the Holy Qur-án. Another noteworthy point about these cross-references is that such of them as refer to a verse embodying some injunctions are divided into two sets, A and B. The A set comprises such cross-references as give further details of the injunction, and the B set includes such cross-references as throw light on the general character of subject of the verse. Besides this, wherever it has not been possible to give the literal rendering and some departure is found necessary, the literal translation is given on the margin

TRANSLITERATION OF THE TEXT.

In transliteration we have adopted the following system which, we venture to say, approximates to the best systems in use.

ا at the beginning of a word, pronounced as *a*, *i*, *u* preceded by a very slight aspiration, like *h* in the English word "honour."

ث *th*, pronounced like *th* in the English word "thing."

ح *h*, a guttural aspirate, stronger than *h*;

خ *kh*, pronounced like the Scotch *ch* in 'loch'.

ذ *dh*, pronounced like the English *th* in 'that,' 'with.'

ص *s*, strongly articulated *s*.

ض *z*, similar to the English *th* in 'this.'

ط *t*, strongly articulated palatal *t*.

ظ *z*, strongly articulated *z*.

ع 'a strong guttural, the pronunciation of which must be learnt by the ear.

غ *gh*, a sound approached very nearly in the *r* 'grasseyé' in French, and in the German *r*. It requires the muscles of the throat to be in the 'gargling' position whilst pronouncing it.

ق *q*, a deep guttural *k* sound.

و *n* (nasal *n*).

ء 'a sort of catch in the voice.

Short vowels are represented by *a* for ا (like *u* in 'bud'); *i* for ي (like *i* in 'bid'); *u* for و (like *oo* in 'wood'); the long vowels by *ā* for آ or إ (like *a* in 'father'); *ī* for ع (like *ee* in 'deep'), *ai* for ا (like *a* in 'sat'); *ū* for و (like *oo* in 'root'), *au* for و (resembling *ou* in 'sound'); and final ي by *ā*.

Highly prolonged vowels (ء) are rendered as *ā*, *ī* and *ū*.

The consonants not included in the above list have the same phonetic value as in the principal languages of Europe.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

In conclusion, we express our heartfelt gratitude and deep indebtedness to those of our friends who have given us any sort of assistance in the publication of this part of the Translation, especially our Printers, Messrs. Addison & Co., Ltd., Madras, who have spared no pains to make the printing of this Part the best that could be done in India. We also take this opportunity to thank, in anticipation, those gentlemen who will, on perusal of this Part, kindly favour us with their valuable suggestions for the improvement of the work and also those who will lend us a helping hand to popularize the work in their respective spheres of influence. It may be stated here that this Translation is not undertaken as a commercial pursuit, but for the sole object of furthering the cause of truth, and thus all income is to be expended on missionary activities.

A PRAYER TO GOD.

This is what we have got to say to men, but the most important solicitation is the one we wish to address to Thee, O God, our Lord. Thou knowest the innermost secrets of our hearts and are perfectly aware what motives have actuated us in doing this work and what desires have impelled us to this undertaking. We pray to Thee to grant us power to finish the work and enable our pens to write the truth. Grant, our Lord, that we may not write a single word contrary to truth and even a single sentence containing so much as a semblance of falsehood. Thy Book is pure like Thyself, but our knowledge and information are meagre and limited, so vouchsafe to us power to represent Thy Book faithfully. Without Thy succour our efforts are unavailing and our endeavours vain. Our Lord, the Master of our minds, give us power to explain the truth and invest our words with such an electrifying charm as may overpower the hearts of all seekers after truth. Grant, our Lord, that our words may weed out of the world traditional prejudices and ill-will rooted in ignorance! Our Lord, darkness has enshrouded the face of the globe and a dismal

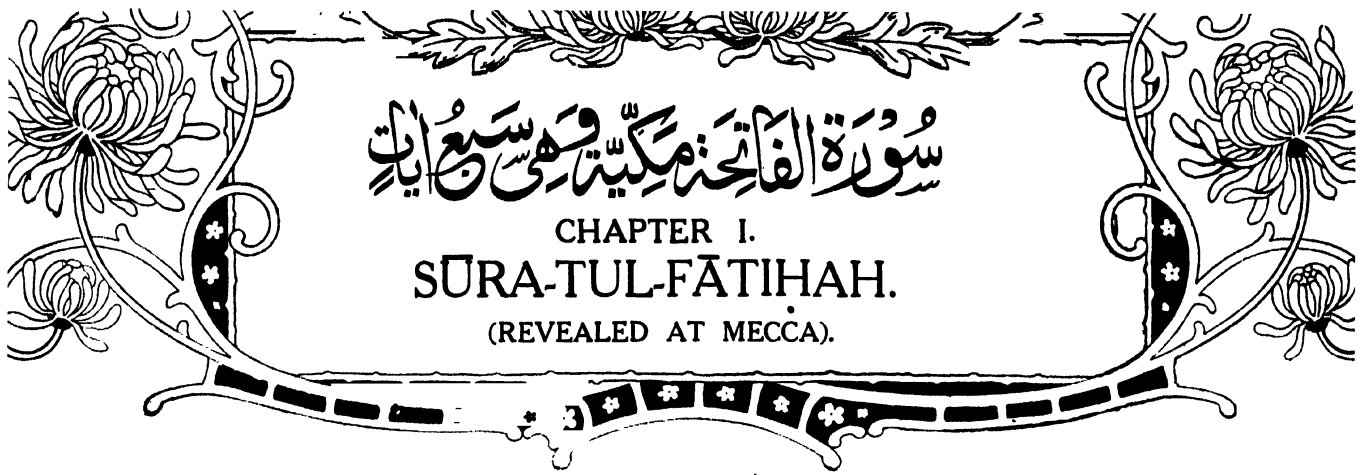
gloom hangs over the surface of the earth ; make Thy sun of guidance appear, so that its bright rays may pierce through and dispel the thick palpable darkness which reigns supreme everywhere, and once more there may be the unhampered sway of light in the world. Through ignorance, people consider that this guidance which Thou, out of Thy infinite mercy, favoured us with for our spiritual and material uplift through the Greatest of all the Prophets, is worthless. So bless our efforts and enable us to hold up the truth before them, so that they may open their eyes and see it to be enamoured of it. Our Lord, make these people also co-sharers with us in the light which Thou hast, out of Thine unbounded grace, granted us, because they are after all Thy creatures and deserve Thy redeeming grace. Worldly splendour may make them forgetful, but their hearts are burning after real happiness and true felicity. Turn to them, O Lord, and just as Thou, at the time of the revelation of this Book, didst make this light spread on all the four quarters of the globe through the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of God be upon him); similarly to-day, through his second Advent in the blessed personality of the Promised Messiah, once more spread the light of Islam all over the face of this Planet. Our Lord, our hearts are convulsing with pain to see the world stuck fast in the quagmire of worldliness, groping helplessly in the surrounding darkness. Shower Thy blessings, so that every virtuous soul may find rest in the comforting lap of Thy love. How long will this remoteness from truth and hatred for reality last? Thou art always true to Thy Word; Thy Messiah doubtless came to fulfil this object; but we long to see, our Lord, the day when the Holy faith of Islam will have ascendancy in the hearts of men, and people will accept the Islam which has been revived by Thee through Thy Promised Messiah. He has purged this Holy faith of all the dross of false stories which had been, throughout the Dark ages, clustering round it. Grant, our Lord, that in all those countries where the blessed name of his Holy faith has not reached at all or has been too feebly heard, there may be chanted in the unity of Islam the sweet chorus: "There is none worthy of worship but Allah, and Muhammad (ﷺ) is His Prophet."

We close with the words that all praises are due to God.

THE EDITORS.

QADIAN, }
4th December, 1915. }





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝ مُلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۝

1. *Bismillā-hir-Rahmā-nir-Rahīm.*

2. *Alḥam-dulillāhi Rabbil-'ālamīn.*

3. *Arrahmā-nir-Rahīm,*

4. *Muliki yau-mid-dīn.*



1. "I BEGIN with the name of Allah,¹ the Beneficent,² the Merciful.³
2. "All praise belongs to Allah, Lord⁴ of the worlds,⁵
3. The Beneficent, the Merciful,
4. "Master⁶ of the Day of Retribution.

Explanatory Notes.—1. Allāh is the name of a Being who is the sole possessor of all perfect attributes and is free from all defects. In the Arabic language, this term is never used for any other thing or being. No other language has a name for the Supreme Being which is at once distinctive and comprehensive. The names found in other languages are all attributive or descriptive and are often used in the plural; but the word "Allāh" is never used in the plural number. Hence, in the absence of a parallel word in the English language we have retained the original name "Allāh" throughout the translation.

2. The original word is *Rahmān* which, like Allāh, is exclusively used for God, and which, we have, for want of a more descriptive word, rendered in English as the "Beneficent." It signifies free and gratuitous providence of God. All boons vouchsafed to mankind without having been earned fall under this attribute. The famous lexicon, *Lisān-ul-'Arab*, says:—

إن الرحمن اسم مخصص لله تعالى لا يجوز أن يسمى به غيره
Rahmān is a name specially used for God. It should not be applied to any other being" (Vol. XV, p. 122).

3. The original word "*Rahīm*," properly speaking, signifies the Giver of the best and the highest reward for virtue.

4. The original word *Rabb* literally means "Creator, Developer and Sustainer," signifying both the creation of a thing and the developing of

it, by degrees, from the lowest to the highest stage of perfection. God is not only the Creator of all things, but it is He who leads them to their highest stage of perfection and sustains them at every stage; e.g., the largest tree is only a development of a small seed, and similarly, the perfect man that of a few drops of blood.

5. The original word '*ālamīn* (worlds) is a comprehensive term, inasmuch as it signifies not only this earth and all heavenly bodies, but also the different planes of existence, viz.:—the mineral, the vegetable, the animal, and the spiritual kingdoms, and then among mankind, the different generations and nationalities. God is thus the Creator of both matter and soul.

This conception of God implies that the God of Islam is not only the God of the Mussalmans, but the God of all peoples; and hence, His religion, Islam, is not for any particular age or nation, but for all ages and nations. It was the Prophet of Islam who, of all prophets, first invited all nations of the world to accept one faith.

6. The original word *Mālik* (Master) sets up a distinction between the Divine Dispenser of rewards and punishments and an earthly administrator of justice. The latter is a mere Judge; neither the life nor the property of those to whom he dispenses justice belongs to him, and so, he cannot exercise the prerogative of mercy. But God is the Creator and Lord of the creation and cannot be accused of injustice, if He gives an ever-increasing reward to the virtuous and shows mercy to the sinners.

General Notes on Chap. I.—Note. 1.—It is a mistake to suppose that the words *Bismillā-hir-Rahmā-nir-Rahīm*, generally rendered as 'In the name of' Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, were not revealed. For Chapter

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ۚ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝

5. 'Iyyāka na'budu, wa iyyāka nasta'in 6. Ihdi-naṣ-ṣirāṭal mustaqīm.

5. "Thee alone do we worship,¹ and ²Thee alone do we ask for help.

6. Guide Thou us on the 'right path:'''

1. The Arabic word for *worship* implies a declaration of God's unity, also complete love for, complete trust in, complete fear of, and complete humility to, God.

2. **اهد** *Ihdi* (guide) signifies the showing of the right path as well as keeping one on the right path, i.e., leading up to the destination. As Islam does not limit the spiritual progress, but even the most spiritually elevated person is, according to Islam, capable of yet further progress; therefore, the comprehensive prayer, **اهدنا الصراط المستقيم** "Guide Thou us on the right path," is taught, which is

equally efficacious for the erring and the guided. While the former prays for the right path, the latter being already on the right path prays for steady progressive adherence to it; and even the greatest prophets stand in need of this prayer, because the stages of nearness to God are endless. Not confined to any specific object, this prayer is all-comprehensive covering the whole ground of human requirements, both worldly and religious, in striking contrast to the Lord's prayer of the Christians, "Give us this day our daily bread," or the prayers of other faiths.

Al-'Alaq, XCVI, first revealed to the Prophet, begins with the words, "Read in the name of thy Lord." So, the words "I read" or "I begin" should be taken as understood before "In the name of Allah," with which every chapter begins. **بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم** therefore means "I begin with the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful." This short sentence is a well-known Islamic formula used at the beginning of every deed, small or great. It embodies a prayer to God appealing especially to two of His attributes (*Rahmān* and *Rahīm*) which are the perfect image of the relationship between man and his Creator. He invokes the first attribute for the provision of all the necessities requisite for an undertaking and then passes on to the second attribute, begging the highest reward for the labour expended. This is the most natural procedure. The Qur-an, as a guidance for man, springs from the first attribute which is, therefore, referred to first when beginning the Holy Book. The fruits of acting upon the guidance come later and depend on the second attribute which is consequently invoked next.

Note 2.—This short chapter is called *Fātiḥah* and it is curious to note that this very name occurs in a prophecy in the Revelation, Chapter X, which also contains a reference to the number of verses in this chapter. The name occurs in the second verse of the aforesaid chapter of the Revelation, where it is translated as *open*. The original Hebrew word is *Fatoah* (פתוח) and the translators, being ignorant of the real significance of the prophecy, translated the word as *open*.

The seven thunders in the prophecy represent the seven verses of this chapter. The Christian writers agree in holding that the prophecy refers to the second advent of Jesus and they are right in their opinion. The little book *Fatoah* or *Fātiḥah* was constantly in the hands of the Promised Messiah, who wrote many commentaries on this chapter, both in Arabic and Urdu, deduced arguments of his truth from its contents, often referred to it in his speeches and writings and constantly used it as his model prayer and exhorted his followers also to do the same. He showed such pearls of divine wisdom and prophecy to be imbedded in the short verses of this pithy chapter as had never been dreamt of before, so much so that one might say with truth that the chapter had remained up to his days a sealed book, as a voice from heaven said to the prophet, "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not."

Note 3.—*Order of verses.*—A deeper study of this chapter discovers another beauty which lies in the wonderful correspondence between the attributes of God and the prayers that follow them in a serial order. This may be shown in the following way:—

1. *Attribute.*—"All praise belongs to Allah."

Prayer.—"Thee alone do we worship." As soon as the devotee thinks God to be the possessor of all the highest attributes in their perfection, the cry of "Thee alone do we worship" rises from the depth of his heart.

2. *Attribute.*—"Lord of the worlds: Creator, Developer and Sustainer of the worlds."

Prayer.—"Thee alone do we ask for help." When the Muslim knows God to be the Creator, and the Preserver and the source of all development, he at once takes shelter in Him, saying "Thee alone do we ask for help."

3. *Attribute.*—"The Beneficent."

Prayer.—"Guide Thou us on the right path." God, out of His beneficence, gives us innumerable blessings without our asking for them. The highest of such gratuitous blessings is guidance in the path which leads to God. Hence, the devotee says "Guide Thou us on the right path, i.e., the shortest and easiest path which leads to Thee."

4. *Attribute.*—"The Merciful."

Prayer.—"Guide Thou us on 'the path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings.'"

Rahīm, here translated as 'the Merciful,' signifies that attribute of God which finds its expression in giving the best reward for labour. The corresponding prayer cited above means, "Keep us steady and firm on the right path till we become heirs to the favours shown to the previous people, because this attribute of God demands that nothing should go in vain."

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

7. *Ṣirāṭ-ladhīna an'amta 'alaihim ghair-il-maghḍūbi 'alaihim wa laḍ-ḍāllīn.*

7. The path of "those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings¹; excepting those on whom ^bThy wrath has descended^a and those who^c have gone astray.³ *

1. Elsewhere, the Holy Qur-ān explains that the favoured people comprise the prophets, the saints, the martyrs, and the righteous (*vide* Chapter IV, verse 70). Similarly, in another verse, the Holy Qur-ān says that the favoured people are the prophets and recipients of revelation who hold direct communion with God (V, 21). Thus, the Muslim prays to be ranked with the prophets—the loftiest ideal conceivable. No other religion sets up such a high ideal for its followers.

2. According to the Holy Prophet and the Qur-ān, the people who were the first to come under this category were the Jews upon whom God showered His favours in abundance, but who, by their persistent transgressions, particularly against Jesus Christ, the prophet, incurred the wrath of God.

3. According to the Holy Prophet and the Holy Qur-ān, the people referred to here are the followers of Christ who forsook his teachings after him and rejected the Holy Prophet of Arabia, about whose advent there were several prophecies in their scriptures.

*The last verse of this chapter embodies a mighty prophecy and, therefore, deserves our special attention. It is made incumbent on each Muslim to pray to God to save him from becoming a Jew and

a Christian and not from becoming one who sets up equals to God, although this verse was at first revealed at Mecca and the bitterest enemies of Islam in Mecca were idol-worshippers, and Jews and Christians had not yet stood in the way of Islam. Had it been the word of man, it would have, in the first place, taught a prayer for safety against nothing but idol-worship, or, at least, idol-worshippers would have been spoken of first of all. But, on the contrary, only Jews and Christians are mentioned, which clearly points to the fact that idol-worshippers would be entirely swept out of Arabia and that the Muslims would be absolutely freed from the fear of joining their ranks. But, at the same time, the verse contains a promise for the advent of a Messiah, for whose rejection the Muslims are threatened to be reckoned among the Jews and whose advent was to be preceded by the ascendancy of the Christian religion. Hence it is that the prayer taught in this verse refers only to Jews and Christians. This prophecy about the utter extinction of the idol-worshippers from Arabia and the coming danger of the Muslims turning Jews (on account of the rejection of the Messiah) and Christians is enough to convince a right-thinking man of the truth of Islam. The Messiah referred to in this verse has already appeared and his name is Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad of Qādiān, (Punjab, India).

5. *Attribute.*—Master of the Day of Retribution.

Prayer.—Guide Thou us in the path of the blessed "who never incurred Thy wrath nor went astray."

When man comes to think of giving an account of his deeds, he begins to dread failure, so pondering over the attribute of "the Master of the Day of Retribution," man, through fear, begins to pray to God to be saved from His wrath.

Note 4.—A close and careful reflection over the individual verses of this chapter and their arrangement brings home the fact that this chapter contains a guidance for man to his final goal of union with God, carrying him step by step through various stages of spiritual development.

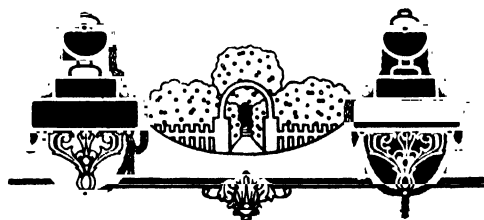
There are only two obvious motives which prompt submission to, or worship of, a being, *viz.*, love and fear, the former being always prompted by beauty and beneficence. So, God has in this chapter appealed to both of these incentives. Some people are moved by a feeling of love, while there are others who, devoid of all the softer sentiments of love, are swayed by fear. But the wisest course is to appeal first to the tender instincts of love, and failing that, to have resort to the feeling of fear; so, quite consistently with human nature, the opening verses of the chapter make mention of such attributes of God as bring His beauty and goodness to the forefront and thereby inspire man with an overwhelming sense of love for Him. His name is Allah, the sole possessor of all perfect attributes and totally free from all defects. He is the Creator and the Sustainer and Supporter of all. It is He who maintains the believer as well as the unbeliever. He has brought into existence all those necessities of our life with which we are not even familiar, but without which it is impossible for us to live. He rewards our good deeds in the most suitable and best manner. When those who are capable of being moved by feelings of love think over these attributes of God, they at once burst into the humble invocation:—

إياك نعبد "Thee alone do we worship." But, on the other hand, those who are dead to all sense of love and are moved only by a sense of fear have their attention drawn to ملك يوم الدين "Master of the Day of Retribution," and realise the awful fact that their deeds are to meet with sure retribution from God and that they will have to appear before Him one day to render an account of their doings. This thought compels them to prostrate themselves before God in humble submission, uttering "Thee alone do we worship." In short, the first portion of the chapter has elements to appeal to minds which, dominated either by love or by fear, come to utter the natural cry of the human soul, "Thee alone do we worship." But at this stage, when, on the one hand, the worshipper sees his own weakness and, on the other, faces the winning charms of the Divine Beloved or stands in awe of His Majesty, he irresistibly breaks forth into the cry إياك نستعين "Thee alone do we ask for help," meaning that 'we worship and obey Thee alone, but we fall short of the full measure of worship, and hence implore help from Thee to attain to the fulness of worship.'

When love reaches this sublime stage and a sense of the glory of God thus consumes all lower passions, human nature of itself bursts into the prayer, اهْدنا الصراط المستقيم "Guide Thou us on the right path." The right path is always

GENERAL NOTES ON CHAPTER I (NOTE 4 *concluded*).

the shortest way. So the above prayer points to the height of love. It shows that the supplicant cannot bear to remain long away from God and, therefore, prays for the shortest path free from zig-zag curves and leading him to God in the shortest possible time. Again those who have access to the royal court may either be ordinary courtiers or the chosen confidants of the king. So the further desire of the human heart is thus expressed in the next verse,— *صراط الذين انعمت عليهم* *i.e.*, "O Lord, show me the right path, but along with it, do me the further favour of showing me the path of those who enjoyed Thy favours and blessings. In other words, my entry into Thy presence may not be like that of ordinary men, but on the other hand, I may be reckoned among Thy dear ones and may combine in myself the character of the lover and the beloved and that Thou might begin to reciprocate my love (for it is the favoured ones of God that are dear to Him, and only those who are deserving of nothing but the favours of God deserve His special love). Thus, man longs for that high stage of love which is free from every tinge of estrangement. At this stage, every man attains to perfection and the lover and the Beloved become one with each other. But as the faith of a Muslim lies half way between hope and fear, so on reaching this stage one desires constancy in it. This natural desire of man found voice in the prayer that he might not be separated from God after attaining to union with Him. Further, as separation proceeds from two obvious causes, *viz.*, the displeasure of the beloved, and faithlessness on the part of the lover, therefore, to guard against both these contingencies, the prayer is supplemented by the words, *غير المغضوب عليهم* *i.e.*, "May it not happen that Thou shouldst get angry with me owing to any mistake on my part," and again, *ولا الضالين* *i.e.*, "May it not happen that on reaching the destination my heart should begin to cherish love for something else and I should in consequence fall away from Thee." Thus the chapter furnishes a complete and comprehensive prayer which God, out of His mercy, has taught to man, and the like of which can never be produced by any other faith of the world. Consider how it is a complete picture of the human nature and how all the desires and hankerings of the human soul find full expression in one short prayer.





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي هَدَانَا لِهَذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ لَوْلَا إِذْ هَدَانَا لَهْدَانَا

R 1.

1. *Bismillā-hir-Raḥmā-nir-Raḥīm.*

2. *Alif Lām-Mīm.* 3. *Dhālī-kal-Kitābu lā raiba fi-hi hudal-lil muttagin.* 4. *Alladhīna*

1. *I BEGIN* with the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.²

2. "Alif Lām-Mīm."³

3. This Book,⁴ wherein there is no doubt,⁵ is a guidance for the God-fearing,⁶



Explanatory Notes.—1. The Chapter *Baqarah* was revealed at Medina. Except a verse or two revealed later, the whole of it was revealed shortly after the Hejira (the Emigration of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina). The traditions prove that the chapters of the Holy Qur-ān were named by the Holy Prophet himself, and some of the chapters go by more than one title.

2. See Notes 1 to 3, Chapter I.

3. It is wrong to change it into A. L. M., as some translators have chosen to do. The original *الم* bears a meaning which vanishes altogether in the English form A. L. M. *الف* stands for the Arabic word *أنا*; signifying "I am;" *لام* stands for the word *الله* (Allāh), and *ميم* for *اعلم* meaning "the Most Knowing." The three letters *الم* are thus an abbreviation for the sentence *أنا الله اعلم* which means, "I am Allāh, the Most Knowing." Abdullah Bin 'Abbās has put this interpretation upon these words, and the Promised Messiah has also

agreed to it. What these and other letters occurring in the Holy Qur-ān mean and how they are to be interpreted will be found in the Introduction.

Golius says, as we learn from Sale, that these letters were added by the scribes and signify *امرلي محمد* i.e., "at the command of Muhammad." But this view is evidently wrong and absolutely unfounded. The evidence of history is quite clear on the point. Whenever the Holy Prophet happened to read this chapter, he read *الم* along with it. Had these letters been a later addition of the scribes, as Golius tells us, the Holy Prophet, while reading the chapter, would have omitted them. Ibn-i-'Abbās says:—

مرابو ياسر بن اخطب في رجال من يهود برسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم وهو يقرأ سورة البقرة الم ذلك الكتب لاريب فيه فاني اخاه حبي بن اخطب في رجال من اليهود فقالوا له يا رسول الله لقد سمعت محمدًا يقول ما انزل اليه الم ذلك الكتب الخ -

Notes on arrangement of the Chapter.—**Note I.**—Like all other chapters of the Holy Qur-an, this also opens with the words "I begin with the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful." This wise and significant arrangement is the exclusive prerogative of the Holy Qur-an. As a rule, all ill-intentioned and ill-meaning actions, however good

EXPLANATORY NOTES—continued.

"Abū Yāsir Bin Akhtab and some Jews passed by the Prophet when he was reciting the opening verses of the Chapter 'Baqarah,' i.e., الم ذلک الکتاب. He came to his brother Huyay Bin Akhtab who was sitting among a company of Jews, and said, 'Do you know it? I swear by God that I heard Muhammad read الم ذلک الکتاب as part of his revelation'" (Ibn-i-Ishaq, Bukhārī's History, and Ibn Jarīr).

This is a clear testimony to the fact that whenever the Holy Prophet read this chapter, he used to read الم with it, which proves that الم is an integral part of the Holy Qur-ān and no interpolation of the scribes. Similarly, we learn from Ibn-i-Mas'ūd:—

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم من قرء حرفاً من كتاب الله فله به حسنة والحسنة بعشراً مثلاً لا أقول الم حرف ولكن الف حرف و لام حرف و مهم حرف -

"The reading of even a single letter from the Holy Qur-ān," said the Holy Prophet "constitutes a virtue" the reward of which is ten times in proportion thereto. I do not say that الم is a single letter, but الف is a letter, لام is a letter and مهم is a letter" (vide Bukhārī's History, Tirmadhi, and Hākim). This tradition is also quoted by Ibn-i-Abi-Shaibah and Bazzār on the authority of 'Auf-Ibn-i-Mālik Al-Ashja'i. These two testimonies amply bear out the fact that these letters (الم) are part and parcel of the Holy Qur-ān and not a later addition of the amanuenses, as Goliuss supposes.

4. The original word ذالک (dhālīka) literally means "that," but has, in the translation, been rendered "this." The reason for this departure is that dhālīka does not here indicate any idea of remoteness, but, according to the accepted usage of the Arabic language, it points to the sublime dignity of the Holy Qur-ān. Thus, apart from any idea of distance, dhālīka signifies that this book is pre-eminently above human ingenuity and enjoys unqualified superiority over all other books of the world. In the absence of a word or phrase in the English language, which may exactly bring out this sense,

dhālīka has been rendered as "this," because it does not here refer to any distant object. Palmer is quite mistaken in saying that, according to the Muslim belief, the Angel Gabriel showed to the Holy Prophet from afar the Holy Book which was in Heaven and consequently, instead of "this book," "that book" was the proper wording. This explanation is entirely unwarranted. In fact, the word dhālīka occurs in the Holy Book in the sense of "this," as explained above, quite a number of times (vide Chapters L, 20; LXXIX, 26, 27).

5. In accordance with the usage of the Arabic language, this verse is capable of a variety of interpretations:—

Firstly.—"This book is a guidance for the God-fearing. There is no doubt about it."

Secondly.—"It is a perfect book. This admits of no doubt." The Arabic phrase زيد العادل means, "Zaid is the only one who is perfect in all the different aspects of justice." Similarly, ذالک الکتاب also means, "This is the only book which embodies all requirements for guidance."

Thirdly.—"It is that book, there is no doubt about it." This meaning refers to the claim of the Holy Qur-ān to be the very book which was promised through Moses (vide Deut. XVIII, 18, 19). لایب فیه Lā-raiba-fī-hi need not be construed as "Nobody will ever entertain any doubt about it," for the Holy Qur-ān itself refers to certain objections raised against it (vide verse 24), but its simple import is that "This book carries with it so many arguments that a right-thinking mind cannot but accept it as a guide, a perfect book, or the promised book." In his Commentary, the Rev. E. M. Wherry writes to say on the authority of an Indian co-religionist of his that the frequent repetition of the statement "There is no doubt about it" on the part of Muhammad, in itself, creates a doubt about the truth of the Holy Qur-ān, because, according to him, it is a guilty conscience that expects an accusation of falsehood. But this view has arisen from a poor grasp of human nature and world's history. It is human nature—and history bears witness to it—that men at first reject teachings contrary to their own

in themselves may they be, lead to disastrous consequences. Generosity, for instance, is an admittedly noble virtue, but if it flows out of the sinister motive of winning public applause, it will no longer be looked upon as a virtue. In short, when prompted by evil motives and bad thoughts, even the best of virtues become the worst of vices. It is to guard against this human propensity and to serve as a warning against all evil intents and ignoble motives that the verse "I begin with the name of Allah, the Beneficent and the Merciful" prefaces every chapter of the Holy Qur-ān.

Note II.—The connecting link between this and the previous chapter is the prayer اهدنا الصراط المستقیم "Guide Thou us on the right path," which is addressed to God in the previous, and meets with divine acceptance in this chapter. 'Guidance in the right path' is the prayer contained in the previous chapter and, quite agreeably to that prayer, this chapter holds out the glad tidings: هدی للمتقین "Here is a guidance for the God-fearing."

Note III.—Summary of the Chapter:—

- (1) To begin with, the purpose underlying the revelation of the Holy Qur-ān is clearly set forth.
- (2) The ultimate end of the believers and the disbelievers is the next point dwelt upon.
- (3) Then follows a clear demonstration that the only possible result of a close study of the believers and the disbelievers is to join the ranks of the former.
- (4) But as man does not accept anything without reason, hence some arguments are advanced about the divine origin of the Holy Qur-ān.
- (5) Necessity of divine revelation for the guidance of the world is established, and the denial of this absolute necessity is proved to be unjustifiable.
- (6) It is made clear that the Holy Prophet of Arabia is not the first prophet, but that since the creation of the world God has been sending prophets for the guidance of man, and that not only in the beginning of the world prophets were sent, but that they continued to appear to the time near to the advent of the Holy Prophet, the line of Israelite prophets being a clear testimony to it.

EXPLANATORY NOTES—continued.

religion, customs and traditions, and accuse the teacher of falsehood and imposture. We know of no prophet who was accepted without any opposition. So, it is quite natural that the Holy Qur-ān should drive home the point at the very outset that this book permits of no doubt as a guide.

Although the Rev. gentleman looks upon the Bible as free from such forms of speech, yet, in fact, we do find in the Bible such expressions at diverse places; as for instance, (1) "All the words of my mouth are in righteousness, there is nothing froward or perverse in them" (Proverbs VIII, 8). (2) "I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I, the Lord, speak righteousness. I declare things that are right" (Isaiah XLV, 19). See also Titus III, 8; I Timothy IV, 9; Revelation XXII, 6; etc.

6. The word *Muttaqī* منقي (God-fearing) is derived from the root انقاى *Ittiqā* which means "to save oneself." Hence, *Muttaqī* is "one who saves himself." As man saves himself from God's wrath by perfect surrender to His will and complete obedience to His commandments, and as God's wrath is the greatest of all dreads which a human being strives to escape, therefore, he who does righteous deeds and, by complete resignation to God's will, attains to that state of human perfection which entitles him to salvation is called *Muttaqī*. Again, as different religions have pointed out different ways of salvation, there has, therefore, sprung up quite a variety of definitions of the word *Muttaqī*. The Christian, the Hindu and the Muslim have each a different conception of this term. According to Islam, however, *Muttaqī* is described in the next verse as having the following six distinguishing marks:—

- (1) Belief in "the unseen."
- (2) Worship of Allāh.
- (3) Kindness to God's creatures.
- (4) Faith in what is sent down to the Holy Prophet of Arabia.
- (5) Faith in what was sent down before the Prophet.
- (6) Firm faith in what was yet to follow.

These six characteristics may be reduced to three principles which contain in them the quintessence

of all religions:—(i) Faith in certain things beyond our perception. These are called 'Aqā'id (Beliefs), (ii) Actions (*A'māl*) which pertain, on one side, to the worship of God and, on the other, to kindness to God's creatures, & (iii) Belief in revelations (*Wāhy*).

The possession of these three characteristics entitles a man to the name *Muttaqī*. But the Holy Qur-ān claims to be a guidance even for the *Muttaqī* (the God-fearing). This refers to the obvious fact that the Holy Qur-ān does not merely enable persons to become God-fearing, but takes them to far higher stages in spiritual development, and that the Quranic measure of guidance is not exhausted in the attainment of this stage, but a great deal yet remains to be attained. The question naturally arises, what further guidance does the Holy Qur-ān offer to its followers when the stage of انقاء (*Ittiqā*) which obviously covers the whole ground of human actions, has been reached. We need not guess at the answer for ourselves, as the question has been answered for us by the Holy Qur-ān itself. It says elsewhere:—

الذين جاهدوا فينا لنهدينهم سبلنا (العنكبوت)

"We do lead to Ourselves those who strive to establish connection with Us" (XXIX, 70). The same thing is expressed in the words للمتقين هدى "guidance for the *Muttaqīn*," i.e., the Holy Qur-ān does not only enlighten mankind on such doctrines and deeds as are the means of obtaining salvation, but it furthermore enables its followers to enjoy personal communion with God. When they spare no pains to obey Divine behests, God Himself invites them to His bliss and speaks to them in His sweet and comforting voice. As a result, the faith heretofore based only on arguments and reasons now turns into conviction rooted in observation and experience. In short, by holding out an unfulfilling promise of further guidance to the *Muttaqī*, God has set forth an undeniable proof for the truth of the Holy Qur-ān. It can be viewed from two different standpoints. *First*, all other religions of the world regard the perfection of human actions as the ultimate goal of religion. They do not claim to take their votaries any further. Islam, however, does not stop short here, but claims to lead its followers far beyond this limit. *Secondly*, unlike other religions, it makes its truth manifest in all fulness even in this world. Those who faithfully follow the teachings of Islam witness the truth of it even in their life-time. God reveals to them His

(7) Reasons are adduced as to why this Prophet did not appear from among the Israelites, but from the people of Mecca, especially the Quraish.

(8) Lastly, arguments are advanced for the truth of the Prophet which comprise the essentials of Islam.

Note IV.—The order and arrangement of the Chapter.—The preceding chapter embodies a prayer for the right path, which is wide and general in its application and conveys no restricted sense. But here in this chapter the right path is described in the specific and concrete form of Islam. To start with, God invites to Himself all those who stand in need of a panacea for their spiritual ills and moral ailments. In doing so, God has adopted the most natural course. Before placing himself under the treatment of a physician, the sick man naturally satisfies himself about the antecedents, experience, merits and other necessary qualifications of the former, and does not like to act upon his advice until he knows it for certain that the physician is decidedly the most competent person for his purpose. Quite consistently with this internal desire of man, this chapter opens with the words *الم*, "I am Allāh, the Most Knowing," bringing it home to the enquirer that one who knows all about his condition and one who has the perfect knowledge of the nature and the workings of his inner and outer faculties and powers, is God alone. He is the best and the most proficient healer of all his spiritual maladies. After finding the most capable and competent physician, man, as a matter of course, turns to him for a suitable remedy for his distemper. It is in perfect consonance with this demand of human nature that *dhālikal kitāb* immediately follows the words *الم*, showing that God does not stop short at pointing out the most efficient physician, but also offers the most definite and perfect recipe. Sometimes, the prescription of a human doctor does good in one respect, but harms in another, and the sick man, in consequence, gets rid of one disease to contract

EXPLANATORY NOTES—concluded.

pleasure. What can be more gratifying for a believer than to hear from God Himself that the path he is following is right and that the religion he professes has proceeded from God? His faith thus becomes deepened and strengthened to a degree beyond the perception of the followers of other religions. This is exactly what distinguishes Islam from other faiths, which no doubt make attempts to base their claims on reason and argument, but lamentably fail to present the proof of experience. Man needs to be certain that the promises held out to him in his scriptures for his life to come are not a delusion; but other religions fail to create this necessary certainty, and the life of their followers in this world affords no guarantee for the truth of the promises meant for the next world. Islam, however, claims to lead such of its followers as do their utmost to follow the Holy Qur-ān to that state of spiritual perfection in which God speaks to them. This claim of Islam is never time-barred. No age passes without witnessing such exalted personages. This constitutes a conclusive argument for, and a crucial test of, the truth of a religion. But all existing religions, with the only exception of Islam, are conspicuous by a miserable lack of it. After Moses his followers continued to enjoy the gift of Divine revelation, but they forfeited this gift when they refused to believe in Christ. The forfeiture of the choicest of God's gifts after their disbelief in Christ was a clear testimony to the fact that they had incurred the displeasure of God. The

gift of revelation was then transferred to those of the Jews who won the approbation of God by accepting Christ. The Christian sages in their turn continued enjoying the gift, till at last they repeated the error into which the Jews had fallen before. They refused to believe in the greatest of prophets who came after Christ. The gift was in consequence withheld from them as well. But those who sided with the Seal of the prophets and followed him became now the recipients of the precious gift and have since then unceasingly enjoyed the blessings of Divine revelation. Every age has been graced by the appearance of inspired personalities. This age too was no exception. It has witnessed its Favoured One in the fulness of time. God, as usual, chose for this age one of his servants Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad and poured upon him His choicest blessings, fulfilling in him the second advent of the Messiah. That Holy personage diffused so abundantly the light granted to him that even now among his followers there is a large number of men who enjoy the privilege of communion with God. This makes it evident that now, on the surface of the Earth, Islam is the only living religion. Such men are the fruits which a religion ought to produce in order to prove its living force. At present, Islam alone of all religions can show such fruit. All other faiths are barren and are but trunks in which the life-sap has long ceased to flow.

another. To remove such misgivings, the Holy Qur-an adds, *هٰذَا كِتَابٌ لَّارِبٍ فِيمَ*, i.e., this book, while holding up remedies whose healing powers and curing efficacies are unquestionable, is entirely free from any sort of untoward teachings which may develop any spiritual disease.

Sometimes, the remedy prescribed by a medical man, though harmless, affords no relief whatever. The patient is none the better for it. To complete the conception of efficacy, the Holy Qur-an adds *هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ* meaning that this recipe, besides being highly useful, has also protective efficacy of warding off all diseases. Elsewhere, the point is made further clear. God says about the Holy Qur-an: *هٰذَا كِتَابٌ شَفَاءٌ لِّهَا فِي الصُّدُورِ (يُونُس)*, i.e., this Book is a cure for all spiritual ailments (X, 58). The words *هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ* (a guidance for the God-fearing) do not only signify that the Holy Qur-an provides a remedy for all sorts of spiritual maladies but also solves another question, viz., what need of the Holy Qur-an is there for those who have been healed of their spiritual diseases? Will they be freed from submission to the dictates of the Holy Qur-an? *هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ* (It is) a guidance for the *Muttaqi* (God-fearing)" includes a reply to this question, implying that at no time can one feel independent of the guidance of the Holy Qur-an but that its teachings will be in constant demand even after the stage of *ittiqā* (God's fear), for the advancement of moral health and the growth of spiritual strength.

To sum up, in these two verses it is set forth that God is the source of this book which aims at the eradication of all spiritual maladies, freeing man from the grip of indifferent remedies which, while mitigating some evils, aggravate others. The object of this Book is not only to stamp out all spiritual and moral illnesses, but also to lead man, step by step, to the highest pinnacle of spiritual elevation, till at last a firm connection between God and man is established and God speaks to him as He did to Noah, Abraham, Moses and others.

يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

yu'minūna bil-ghaibi wa yuqimūnaṣ-ṣalāta wa mimmā razaqnā-hum yunfiqūn.

4. Who believe in 'the unseen' and ^b observe prayer,² and 'expend out of what We have provided them with';³

1. الغيب (the unseen) signifies the tenets of faith which pertain to things beyond the compass of human vision; such as belief in God, Angels, Day of Judgment, Heaven and Hell, etc. But it must not be understood that Muslims are herein required to believe in what they cannot grasp. Nothing is farther from Islam than making the salvation of man rest upon what he is unable to comprehend. The supersensible need not necessarily be irrational. Nothing of 'the unseen' which a Muslim is called upon to believe is outside the scope of reason. There are in man many faculties which, though not openly perceived, are clearly demonstrable by reason and are without doubt believed to exist. Similarly, there are many things in the world which, though unseen, are yet proved to exist by arguments, and none can dare deny their existence. It should not, therefore, be inferred that the belief in 'the unseen' means anything like a blind faith in some mysteries. It is, therefore, wrong to suppose, as the Rev. Dr. Wherry has done in his Commentary, that Islam also, like Christianity, forces upon its followers sundry mysteries of faith and that, therefore, they have no right to refuse to believe in (irrational) mysteries like *Trinity in Unity* and the Sonship of Christ.

2. The Arabic word يقيمون (observe) literally means 'are steadfast in', 'put in a right state,' and 'set up' (*vide* Lisān-ul-'Arab, Vol. XV and Tājul 'Arūs, Vol. VII, p. 35). Thus, the sentence means that the God-fearing are steadfast in their prayers, *i.e.*, on the one hand, they are regular and punctual in observing their prayers, and on the other, they observe them not imperfectly but thoroughly. In Arabic phraseology, a business marked by some defect is spoken of as assuming a *sitting* posture, and one

being performed in all desirable ways is represented as *standing*. Hence, 'to set up' the prayers means 'to perform them in a thorough manner.' صلوة (*ṣalāt*) means *prayer*, and when ascribed to God it means *mercy*. But technically, *ṣalāt* implies the five daily devotions which are binding upon every Muslim adult: male or female. For detailed particulars, the reader is referred to the Introduction and to our pamphlet, "The Islamic mode of Worship."

3. In this sentence the God-fearing person is enjoined to expend out of what God has given him, for the welfare of mankind. This means sympathy and mutual help in their widest possible sense, for the verse is comprehensive and includes all kinds of gifts that man receives from his Maker. Thus wealth, power, influence, government, physical and intellectual faculties, in short, all that one may have received from God must, in part at least, be devoted to the well-being of His creatures. The injunction has another equally important aspect. The God-fearing care to possess only what "God has provided them with." God-given things are those of our belongings which are obtained in strict compliance with God's will. It is, therefore, absolutely forbidden to earn or collect money by unfair means and then to spend it for the welfare of human beings. This injunction condemns the detestable practice of hoarding money by means of fraud and other designs of trickery and cheating, and making large donations to charitable works out of the wealth thus amassed, with no object but to win popular applause. Under the Divine injunction, a God-fearing person is bound to earn whatever he can by honest means and to give away a portion of it to relieve the poor and the needy.

In verse 4, we learn that, according to Islam, the lowest degree of human advancement is for a man to believe in God on the strength of arguments and to establish such a deep connection with Him that he may be ever prepared to suffer every loss for His sake and devote all his powers, faculties, forces and possessions to the furtherance of others' happiness and to the alleviation of pain and penury in the world. This elementary standard of spiritual

a. 5: 95; 6: 104; 12: 53; 21: 50; 35: 19; 36: 12; 50: 34; 67: 13 (God); 6: 10 (Angels); 32: 18 (Heaven).

b (A) 2: 239; 4: 44, 102, 103, 104; 5: 7; 11: 115; 16: 111; 68: 10.

(B) 2: 44, 84, 111, 278; 4: 143, 163; 9: 72; 20: 15, 46; 30: 32; 74: 44; 108: 3.

c (A) 2: 216, 220, 264, 265, 268, 272, 274; 4: 39; 9: 61, 104; 24: 23.

(B) 2: 196, 246, 263, 269; 3: 93; 8: 4, 61; 9: 35, 54, 55, 59, 104; 14: 32; 22: 36; 28: 55; 30: 40; 32: 17; 35: 30; 42: 39; 47: 38, 39; 57: 11, 19; 98: 6; 107: 8.

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۖ وَ
بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ ۖ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ۖ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَسَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنْذِرَتْهُمْ

5. *Walladhīna yu'minūna bimā unzila ilaika wa mā unzila min qablik, wa bil-ākhirati hum yuqinūn.*

6. *Ulā'ika 'alā hudam-mir-Rabbi-him wa ulā'ika humul-muflihūn.* 7. *Innal-ladhīna kafarū sawā'un 'alaihim a-andhartā-hum*

5. And who ^abelieve in ^bwhat has been sent down to thee, and ^cwhat has been sent down before thee,¹ and firm faith have they in ^awhat is to come.²

6. It is they who follow the guidance from their Lord,³ and it is they who shall succeed.

1. Some Christian writers have stumbled at the significance of this verse. They seem to think that herein Muslims are required to act upon the Bible. This view is *primā facie* absurd. It is enough for a Muslim to follow the Holy Qur-ān which embraces all that previous scriptures, including the Bible, contained by way of guidance. This verse is not restricted in its signification to the Bible alone, but includes the whole mass of revelations sent down to mankind in all places and at all times. The Holy Qur-ān makes the point clear when it says:—

وَأَنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ (فَاطِر)

“There have been no people but there has passed among them a prophet” (XXXV, 25). Again in XVI, 37, we read : (النحل) ولقد بعثنا في كل أمة رسولا

“And among every people have We raised a Messenger.”

This verse does not enjoin the believers to believe in the Bible alone, but in all the revelations previous to the Holy Qur-ān. The Holy Prophet is reported to have treated the Zoroastrians as a “people of the Book,” and likewise, during the earlier days of Islam, the Hindus too were looked upon as such. Thus, any pre-Islamic book which is claimed by a large section of human beings to have proceeded from God will be allowed to pass for a revealed book within the meaning of the verse under discussion, because God says that no nation has passed without witnessing the appearance of a prophet.

edification also includes a belief in the truth of the Holy Qur-an and all revealed scriptures of old, no matter wherever they happen to be found, in India, Egypt, Persia, China, or anywhere else. It also embraces a further conviction that the favours of God have not come to an end; He will for ever continue to speak to His deserving servants (verse 5).

In verse 6 God continues that those who attain to this rudimentary state of spiritual process, find all the approaches leading up to God open to them and their speed gets accelerated; and ever onward they proceed, as if by bounds and strides. But every claim when presented to the world meets with a class of ready believers and with

a 49: 15. b 2: 100, 286; 3: 32; 4: 163, 175; 5: 16, 49; 6: 105, 156; 7: 53; 10: 58; 14: 2; 15: 10; 17: 10, 42, 91; 20: 3; 21: 11; 54: 18; 80: 12-17; 98: 4.

c 2: 137; 3: 85, 200; 4: 137, 163; 16: 37; 5: 60; 35: 25; 42: 16.

d 1: 7; 4: 70; 7: 36; 83: 41; 61: 7; 62: 4; 108: 2.

EXPLANATORY NOTES—concluded.

As to the question of guidance, we have the clear word of God declaring the Holy Qur-ān as the only book of guidance now and for all time to come, which dispenses with the necessity of looking to other books for guidance. A reference to the earthly modes of government will serve to illustrate the point we are considering. Worldy governments enact many laws to meet the exigencies of time and afterwards repeal them. We continue to look upon those repealed laws as the statutes of Government, but do not act upon them because other laws have replaced them. The fact that the repealed laws are now dead letters cannot, however, be taken to mean that they were not framed by Government but are only the inventions of the people. Similarly, before Islam, there were sent by God many laws which He subsequently abrogated. As the Holy Qur-ān is now the only book of guidance for us, we are cautioned against supposing the previous scriptures to be books of men and the prophets mentioned therein to be (God forbid!) impostors. Moreover, it is clearly enjoined upon us that, along with a belief in this revelation (the Qur-ān), we must preserve our faith in the previous prophets and their revelations. This being the case, it is foolish to infer that the Muslims are required to follow the Bible, because in that case they will also have to follow the Vedas and the Zend-Avesta. The fact is that the Muslims are warned against thinking that there was no scripture revealed prior to the Holy Qur-ān or that the former prophets were impostors. They are, on the other hand, required to believe that the previous prophets were true prophets and the revelations received by them were from God. The point can be easily understood by a reference to the attitude of the Christians towards the Old Testament. They believe that all the books included in the Old Testament are Divine Books, yet they do not act upon them, because they consider the Old Testament as cancelled on the advent of Christ.

2. The term *ākhirat* أخرة has a twofold meaning. *First*, it signifies the Doomsday which is the last day of the world's existence. *Secondly*, it means the revelation which is to follow. Thus, taking the latter view, the whole text means: "Those who believe in what is sent down to thee, and what was sent down before thee, and who have a firm faith in what will be sent down after thee." This verse speaks about revelations and sets forth as a necessary condition of *Mattaqī* (the God-fearing) that they believe in the revelation given to the Holy Prophet and in all the revelations which preceded him, and have a firm faith in the revelation that will follow him. While the word ایمان *imān* (belief) has been used in reference to the revelations, present and past, the term یقین *yaqīn* (firm faith) has been used in reference to the future revelations; because (belief) concerns anything fixed and determined, and as the future revelations were not concrete and determinate at the time when this verse was revealed, so the word *yaqīn* (firm faith) has been properly used with reference to them.

The concluding portion of the text read in the light of the following words of Chapter LXII (الجمعة) cannot fail to convince the reader that it has refer-

ence to the revelations of the Promised Messiah whose advent was to mark the latter days of the world:—

هو الذي بعث في الأميين رسولا منهم يتلوا عليهم آياته و
تذكرهم ويعلمهم الكتاب والحكمة و ان كانوا من قبل لفي
ضلال مبين و آخرين عنهم لما يلحقوا بهم وهو العزيز الحكيم
"It is He Who has sent to the illiterate people a Prophet from among themselves who recites to them His signs and purifies them and teaches them the Book and Wisdom, though they were before in a manifest error; and similarly, that Prophet will read over His signs to another people who are yet to join them, and will purify them and teach them the Book and Wisdom; He is All-powerful, and All-wise (i.e., it is not impossible for Him to do so. It is easy for Him. He is All-wise and all things happen under His wise will. At some future time when spirituality will wane, He will arrange for the guidance of men as He has done now)."

In these verses the Holy Qur-ān has clearly spoken of the two advents of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him). His *first* advent took place when the Holy Qur-ān was revealed and given out to the world as a book of guidance for the world. His *second* advent was to take place in the latter days. But by the *second* advent of the Prophet it is not meant that he will himself come for the second time, nor should it be supposed for a moment that the soul of the Holy Prophet will migrate into a second human body. In fact, the second advent of the Holy Prophet means the appearance of one of his followers who, following in his footsteps with utmost fidelity, will completely lose his individuality in that of the Prophet and thus become one with him. Such a follower will be the reflex of the Holy Prophet himself, and all the excellences of the latter will be found to be mirrored in the former. He will thus be identified with the Prophet himself. The advent of such a one will be the advent of the Prophet, and the achievements of such a follower will be the accomplishments of the Master.

Further light is thrown on the point by the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) who prophesied that, in the latter days, when Islam would fall into decay, God would raise a prophet from among His followers who would be called Mahdi and Messiah. In the verse under discussion (v. 5), the Muslims are enjoined to believe in him and his revelation. It may be mentioned in passing that the Promised One has already appeared, and though many have opposed him, yet his mission, like the mission of his prototype, Jesus of Nazareth, is making sure and steady progress, and, like it, it bids fair to overspread the whole face of the wide earth. The name of the Promised One is *Mirzā Ghulām Ahmad of Qādīān*, Punjab, India.

3. Literally, it is they that are on guidance from their Lord, which signifies that the God-fearing (*Muttaqī*) take a firm stand on the bed-rock of guidance, i.e., after fulfilling the aforementioned conditions, they attain to that state of perfection when guidance becomes a permanent possession with them.

أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ⁷ خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ
 وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةً⁸ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ⁹ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ
 مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَيَا أَيُّومِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ⁹

am lam tundhir-hum lā yu'minūn.

8. *Khatamal-lāhu 'alā qulūbi-him wa 'alā sam'i-him wa 'alā absūri-him ghishāwah, wa la-hum 'adhābun 'azīm.*

R 2.

9. *Wa minan-nāsi maṇ-yaqūlu āman-nū billāhi wa bil yau-mil-ākhirī wa mū hum bi-mu'minīn.*

7. "Verily, those who have disbelieved—while it is alike to them whether thou warn them or warn them not—will not believe.¹

8. "Allāh has sealed up their hearts and their ears, and over their eyes is a covering; and for them is a severe punishment.²

9. "And of these people, there are some who say: 'We believe in Allāh and in the last day': but they are not believers at all.³

1. The English translators have made a serious mistake in interpreting this verse. They take the verse to mean that the disbelievers will not believe whether they are admonished or not. This interpretation obviously runs counter to the facts of actual experience and is directly opposed to the teachings of the Qur-ān. We know of many disbelievers who afterwards came to believe, and the Holy Qur-ān also says: "It is He Who has sent to the illiterate people a Prophet from among themselves

who recites to them His signs and purifies them and teaches them the Book and Wisdom, though they were before in a manifest error" (LXII, 3). This verse not only convinces us of the possibility of the true conversion of disbelievers to Islam, but presents it as a historical fact. Certain Christian writers have erroneously inferred from the verse under discussion that, according to the Holy Qur-ān, some people are arbitrarily destined for hell and, therefore, they have no choice but to stray away

another of wilful discards. Consequently, we read in verse 7 that ordinarily whosoever ponders over this book is sure to grasp the truth, but there is a class of men who are quite indifferent to it. Warning and not warning are equally unavailing in their case, unless, of course, they shake off their indifferent attitude and learn to pay heed to the word of God. Guidance enters the mind only when it is open for it, but cannot find its way in when it is closed against it.

In verse 8 it is stated that as such class of men do not use their spiritual faculties, their case becomes hopeless. It is idle to think that these people who quite perversely set aside the truth will not get into trouble. They will have to pay dearly for the disregard and lack of attention they show towards the truth, just as a sick man suffers for his disregard of the true remedy.

Besides the believers and the unbelievers, there is another class of men which invariably springs up along with the supporters and opposers when a mighty dispensation is set on foot. This is the class of hypocrites. Those who have neither the courage to oppose openly nor the sense to decide for themselves maintain their connection with both sides

a 4 : 169, 170 ; 26 : 137 ; 36 : 11.

b 4 : 156, 157 ; 6 : 26, 45-47 ; 7 : 101, 180 ; 10 : 89 ; 45 : 24 ; 47 : 25 ; 83 : 15.

c 2 : 15, 77, 205 ; 3 : 73 ; 4 : 61-64, 82 ; 5 : 42 ; 9 : 57 ; 29 : 11 ; 49 : 15 ; 68 : 2, 3.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.—*Concluded.*

from God's guidance. This is positively contrary to the spirit of the Holy Qur-ān which says (*vide* VI, 149, 150):—

سـيقول الذين اشرکوا لو شاء الله ما اشرکنا ولا
آباءنا ولا حرمنا من شیء ط کذلک کذب الذين من
قبلهم حتی ذاقوا بآسنا ط قل هل عندکم من علم
فتخرجوه لنا ط ان تتبعون الا الظن وان انتم الا
تخرمون ٥ قل فله الحجة البالغة فلو شاء لهدکم
اجمعين ٥ (الانعام)

These verses imply that the infidels will say that if God had willed, they and their forefathers would have refrained from setting up equals with Him, nor would they have rendered anything unlawful, *i.e.*, God's non-interference in their doings clearly showed that He sanctioned for them what they did and that He had pre-designed the fate for them. The Holy Qur-ān continues in reply: (1) Former peoples also said like things till they were overtaken by punishment. It means that if, as they say, God had caused them to set up equals with Him, He would not have punished them for doing so. The simple fact that God chastised the previous peoples for their setting others on a par with Him proves that He did not approve of their actions. (2) The second answer given is that to prove the truth of a statement, some argument must be adduced. If, as they say, God forces them to exalt others to the same rank with Him, and so they are unable to give it up, then let them bring forward some argument, but this they cannot do; for all that they assert is the outcome of mere fancy. (3) God has cogent reasons. From times immemorial, He has been revealing, through His prophets, His words full of deep wisdom and sound arguments, thereby inviting His creatures to the truth. If, however, any compulsion from God had bound the infidels to disbelief, He would not have sent any of the revelations and the prophets. (4) If God had chosen to use force, He would have forced all to follow His guidance. He would not have allowed any of His creatures to set up equals with Himself, nor would He have allowed so much diversity of faith and blasphemy to prevail in the world. Thus, fatalistic predestination is not warranted by the Holy Qur-ān and the verse under discussion cannot be interpreted in direct defiance of Islamic principles. It is their lack of due deliberation on the Holy Qur-ān that is responsible for the error into which the translators have fallen, in interpreting verses like the one under discussion. The fact is that the words "سواء عليهم ءانذرتهم ام لم تنذرهم" (While) it is alike to them whether thou warn them or warn them not," make a dependent clause and should not be taken as independent. So, the correct significance of the words is that there is no chance for the disbelievers to believe while they are indifferent to the admonition of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God).

2. This verse refers to the disbelievers described above as absolutely indifferent to truth. They re-

fused to employ their hearts, eyes, and ears for the comprehension of the truth; as a punishment, their hearts and ears were sealed, and a covering came to envelop their eyes. And this is a punishment which is quite in agreement with what we observe in the physical world. Our powers or faculties, when not in use for a long time, become wholly useless. The eyes lose their power of sight, if they are not used for a long time; and so our limbs get shrunk and dwindled for the same reason. Some Hindu gymnosophists keep one of their arms in continued disuse for a long time, and, as a result, the arm gets atrophied. It was in just conformity with this inexorable law of nature that the ill-natured infidels lost their faculty of faith, because they refused to make use of it in seeking and approaching the truth which the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) presented before them. This faculty of research and enquiry has for its organs, mind, ears and eyes, and because these were left inactive for a long time, they became absolutely inert and useless, through the operation of natural laws which are laws of God; for God Himself is the controller and the final cause of this system of causes and effects, and indeed every cause is followed by its effect under His supreme will. Hence, it is only the natural effect of the wilful indifference of disbelievers that is described in the words, "Allāh has sealed up their hearts and their ears, and over their eyes is a covering." It is, therefore, a mistake to read into the verse the entirely unwarrantable meaning that as God had sealed their hearts, therefore, they could not believe. The sequence, as set forth in the verse, is clear. The infidels persisted in the disuse of their faculties which, in consequence, got sealed up against the truth. This interpretation is corroborated by other verses of the Holy Qur-ān; for instance:—
بل طبع الله علیها بکفرهم (النساء)
"Nay, Allāh has sealed up their hearts on account of their disbelief" (IV, 156). Again,

کلا بل ران علی قلوبهم ما كانوا یکسبون (التطیف)

"Nay, the hearts of the disbelievers have been sealed up by the deeds they have done" (LXXXIII, 15). The heart, the eye, and the ear in the verse under discussion indicate those spiritual organs for discerning the truth.

3. "A belief in God and the Day of Judgment should not be considered to suffice for the salvation of man. They are respectively the first and the final points of the whole doctrinal and practical ground. The sphere of doctrine and practice begins with the belief in the existence of God and ends with the belief in the Day of Judgment, after which the actions of this life come to an end, and time for retribution commences. Hence, a belief in the existence of God and the Day of Judgment covers all those principles of religion which are essential for a Muslim, as well as all rules of conduct which become binding upon man when he comes to have belief in God, and for which he expects reward on the Day of Judgment.

يُخٰدِعُونَ اللّٰهَ وَالَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ اِلَّا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَ
 مَا يَشْعُرُونَ¹⁰ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللّٰهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ
 عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْذِبُوْنَ¹¹ ۝ وَاِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوْا

10. *Yukhūdī' ū-nal-lūha wal-ladhīna āmanu, wa mā yakhda'ūna illā anfusa-hum wa mā yash'urūn.*

11. *Fī qulūbi-him maraḍun fa-zāda-humul-lūhu maraḍū, wa lahum 'adhūbun alīmum-bimū kūnū yakdhibūn.* 12. *Wa idhū qīla la-hum lā tufsidū*

10. ^a They strive to deceive Allāh and those who believe, but they deceive none but themselves; only they perceive it not.¹

11. ^b In their hearts there is a disease, and that disease has Allāh increased to them²; and for them is a sore chastisement, for that they lied.

1. The words خَادِع (Khāda'a) and خَدَع (Khada'a) used in this verse, although derived from a common root, are different in significance. The translators of the Holy Qur-ān, failing to grasp the difference between the meaning of these words, have entirely mistranslated the verse. We find in the *Kulliyāt-i-Abul Baqā* (p. 164):—

يقال خَادِع إذا لم يبلغ مراده وخَدَع إذا بلغ مراده i.e., the word خَادِع (Khāda'a) is used when the deceiver is not successful in his attempt at deception, and خَدَع (Khada'a) when the party intended by the deceiver to be deceived falls a victim to the deception. The above distinction is corroborated by Lane in his *Arabic-English Lexicon*, Part II, p. 709. He says: "One says of a man خَادِع when he has not attained his desire and خَدَع when he has attained his desire." Accordingly, the verse means that the disbelievers attempt to deceive God and the believers, but the latter are not affected by their deception (God cannot be affected by their treachery, because He knows all their secrets beforehand; and the believers escape their fraud, because God forewarns them against their evil designs); but, by these attempts at deception, their own selves are deceived, because they are deluded into the idea that, by acting deceitfully, they become safe, while, in fact, they are thus paving the way for their own ruin.

Here it should not be understood that the hypocrites actually wish to deceive God, for one who believes in God cannot even think of deceiving Him, because deception can conceivably be planned upon one who is ignorant, but believers in God believe Him

to be All-knowing; so their attempting to deceive God does not mean that they wilfully try to deceive Him, but, as common in the Arabic language, the word خَادِع (Khāda'a) is used here in a figurative and not a literal sense. It signifies that the hypocrites appear to act deceitfully, because when two actions are similar, the word for the one can be used to denote the other, although the word may not convey exactly the same meaning. Here also, it is told of the hypocrites that they outwardly professed Islamic doctrines although their hearts cherished contrary views. This they did only to share the benefits which were to fall to the lot of the Muslims. But the progress of the Muslims depended upon the grace of God, who knew all the hidden secrets of the heart. Consequently, though their action was not the outcome of a desire to deceive God, yet it was quite like deception; hence, the word deception has been used for it. The figurative sense of this word is made further clear by a reference to the word *ishtirā* (purchase) used in verse 17 to connote the barter of error for guidance effected by the unbelievers, although the action is not actually a commercial transaction.

2. مَرَضٌ (maraḍ) means the disease of hypocrisy. The aggravation of the disease by God means that He continued to add to the prosperity of the Muslims and to the ordinances of the Muslim Law, which led the hypocrites to go from bad to worse. The aggravation of the disease is attributed to God, because it was He who granted prosperity to the Muslims and amplified the law for them which was the cause of the increase of their disease.

and try to please both. We are informed of these people in verses 9 to 21. We learn from verses 9 and 10 that they profess to be Muslims, but Islam is not satisfied with a lip-profession; on the contrary, it enjoins purity of thought and action. These people lack this essential and are therefore included by the Holy Qur-an in the class of unbelievers. The outward professions are only a simulation. In verse 11 it is stated that a hypocrite can never be happy in the true sense of the word and always remains in trouble in consequence of his lying habits. The hypocrites of the Holy Prophet's

فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ ۚ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ
وَلَكِنْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۚ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ امْكُتِبُوا كَمَا آمَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُوا

fil-arḍi qālū inna-mā nahnu muṣliḥūn.

13. *Alā inna-hum humul-mufsidūna wa lākillā yash'urūn.* 14. *Wa idhā qīla la hum āminū ka-mā āmanan-nāsu qālū*

12. And when it is said to them : "Create not disorder in the earth," they say : 'We are only promoters of peace.'

13. Beware ! it is they themselves that create disorder, but they perceive it not.'

I. The hypocrites outwardly professed the Holy Faith of Islam, but secretly they sided with the Jews and the Pagans, and urged them to fight with the Muslims and tried to sow discord among the Muslims themselves. To these activities of the hypocrites we find clear references in the Holy Qur-ān. For instance, we read in Chapter LIX, 12:—

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا يَقُولُونَ لِأَخْوَانِهِمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ
أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَئِنْ أَخْرَجْنَاهُمْ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا نَطِيعُ فَيْكُمْ أَحَدًا
أَبَدًا وَإِنْ قُوتَلْتُمْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ لَهُمْ كَذِبُونَ (الحشر)

"Don't ye see the hypocrites? They say to their brethren who are the people of the Book, but who have no faith in Islam, 'If ye are compelled to leave Medina, we will leave the town with you, and will not listen to any body against your cause. And if ye are required to fight with the Muslims, we will certainly side with you.' God bears witness that the hypocrites are liars." In these verses it is mentioned that the hypocrites were secretly exciting the Jews against the Muslims and provoking the latter to war against them by repeated assurances of their own help. As to their attempt to sow discord among the Muslims, the Holy Qur-ān says:—

هَمُ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ لَا تُنْفِقُوا عَلَيَّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى
يَنْفَضُوا ۚ وَلِلَّهِ خَزَائِنُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ
لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ۚ يَقُولُونَ لِمَنْ رَجَعْنَا إِلَى الْمَدِينَةِ لِيُخْرِجَنَا الْأَعَزُّ
مِنْهَا الْأَذَلُّ ۚ وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَكِنَّ
الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (المنافقون)

"It is the hypocrites who dissuade men from spending anything on the companions of the Holy Prophet, so that the latter may scatter away. And to Allāh belong all the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand it. They say : 'If we return to Medina, the most honoured man will drive out the most contemptible one.' But all honour belongs to Allāh, His Prophet, and the true believers. But the hypocrites do not know it"

(LXIII, 8, 9). In this passage God mentions two noteworthy practices of the hypocrites. *First*, it was usual with them to induce the men of Medina not to help the poor Muslims, who, compelled by the enemies of Islam, had forsaken their homes and come over to Medina along with the Prophet, so that they might be scattered. God says that if they do so, He will make some other provision for the Muslims. *Secondly*, they, in order to undermine the prestige of the Holy Prophet, posed as men of influence and said that they would turn out the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him). A well-known incident narrated in authentic traditions will serve to illustrate the above statement. It is related that, on the occasion of the battle of the Bani Mustaliq, there was a quarrel between a *Muhājir* (one of the Emigrants) and an *Anṣārī* (one of the Helpers, i.e., those men of Medina who gave shelter to the Emigrants), and their respective friends came to their aid. Availing himself of the opportunity, Abdullah Bin Ubayy Bin Salūl, the chief of the hypocrites, began to excite the company of the *Anṣār*, saying : "These homeless strangers whom we gave refuge are now quarrelling with us. The most respected man of Medina (he meant himself) will turn out of Medina the most contemptible man (he meant the Holy Prophet, the blessings of God be upon him)." But his words had no effect upon those whose hearts were full of faith, and they, instead of falling a prey to his machinations, rebuked him ; even his own son stood up to defy him. By such means were the hypocrites trying to sow dissension and discord among the Muslims themselves and between the Muslims and their foes. Whenever they were asked why they acted like that, they evaded the question with the make-believe that they were prompted by nothing but sincerity of purpose and that their intention was not to create any ill-will but to establish mutual cordiality, and that those things they did only from a consideration of expediency.

days could not likewise enjoy happiness in life. In verses 12 to 16 an account of the hypocrites is given. They are described to be stirring up disturbance and showing feebleness of faith and, when remonstrated with, putting forward lame excuses. Their life is all along one of mean compromises, now associating themselves with the Muslims and then identifying themselves with the chiefs of the unbelievers.

14

أَنْتُمْ كَمَا آمَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ ۖ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ
وَإِذَا قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شَيَاطِينِهِمْ قَالُوا
إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزَءُونَ ۚ اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ

a-nu'minu kamā āmanas-sufahā'u alā inna hum humus-sufāhā'u wa lūkīl-lā ya'lamūn.

15. *Wa idhū laqul-ladhīna āmanū qūlū āmannū, wa idhū khalaw ilā shayāṭīni him qūlū innā ma'a-kum, inna-mā nahnu mustahzī'ūn.* 16. *Allāhu yastahzī'u bi-him wa yamuddu hum*

14 And when it is said to them: 'Believe ye as others have believed'; they say: 'Shall we believe as the simple people have believed?' Beware! it is they that are simple, but they know it not.'

15. "And when they meet those who believe, they say, 'We believe'; but when they are alone with their 'ringleaders,' they say, 'We are with you; we were but mocking.'

1. سَفَهَاءُ (*Sufahā'*) is the plural of سَفِيه (*Safih*) which has a double significance: (1) simple, light-witted, (2) incapable of protecting one's property. We read the word in the latter sense in the following verse of the Holy Qur-ān: وَلَا تُولُوا السُّفَهَاءَ ۖ أَمْوَالُكُمْ (i.e., those who cannot protect their possessions and prove themselves to be spendthrifts should not be entrusted with any property (IV, 6).

The Arabic idiom سَفَهَ الشَّرَاب (*Safi-hash-sharīb*) according to the *Lisa-nul-'Arab* (Vol.18, p.393), means, "he exceeded in the use of the beverage" and سَفَهَ الْمَاء (*Safi-hal-mā'a*), according to Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon*, means, "he drank water immoderately." The hypocrites called the true Muslims سَفَهَاءَ (*Sufahā'*) because, in their opinion, they (the hypocrites) could protect their property by maintaining friendly relations with the disbelievers, whereas the Muslims, on account of their rigid aloofness from the disbelievers, were exposing their possessions to insecurity; and moreover, the Muslims were, according to them, guilty of lavish expenditure for religious purposes. God replies to these imputations, saying that, in the long run, the hypocrites will witness the ruin of their possessions, whereas the Muslims will succeed; but the hypocrites do not know it.

2. The word "Ringleaders" (*Shayārīn*) alludes to the Jews with whom the hypocrites mixed for their evil designs. The original Arabic word does not here mean 'Satans', it is only a descriptive word used for the inciters of the hypocrites. The word شَيْطَان *Shaiṭān* (plural *Shayārīn*) comes either from the root شَطَن *shṭn*. The former means 'straying away from truth' and, therefore, *Shaiṭān* means 'one who has gone astray from the right path.' Taking the latter root which means 'burning,' the

word *Shaiṭān* signifies 'one burnt or doomed to perish.' Thus, *Shayārīn* signifies 'those men who egged on the hypocrites, and who were burning with jealousy and hate to see the Muslims prosper, and who had gone astray from the truth.' *Shaiṭān* also means 'an unruly and quarrelsome fellow,' and the leaders of the hypocrites were so called because they were constantly quarrelling with the Muslims. The English translators have rendered the word as 'the satans' or 'the devils.' Following this wrong translation, Sale and other translators have brought forward the objection that the Holy Qur-ān has reviled the Jews and the Christians in this verse. The objection is evidently due to their failure to grasp the true sense of the word *Shaiṭān*, as used here. As already explained, the Arabic word *Shaiṭān* does not always mean 'a devil.' The following tradition lends additional support to this view. The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) said to his companions by way of advice.

الراكب شيطان والراكبان شيطانان والثلاثة ركب
i.e., "A single rider is a *Shaiṭān*, a pair of riders is also a pair of *Shaiṭāns*, but three riders are a body of riders." The Holy Prophet could not, for all the world, call his loving followers 'devils.' Evidently, the meaning is that, in view of the dangerous condition of the roads and other attendant hazards of a journey in those days, one who journeyed alone ran headlong to his destruction. Even a pair were not safe, and in order to ensure safety, the least number to start on a journey must have been three. The objection of the English translators has arisen from their inadequate acquaintance with the Arabic language. Moreover, they should have been chary of their objections in view of the Gospel texts (Mat. XII, 39; XXIII, 33; Mark VIII, 33) where Jesus calls His opposers 'serpents,' 'an adulterous generation' and

16

فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَشَرُّ الْأَضْلَلَةِ بِالْهُدَىٰ ۖ

17

فَمَا رَبَّكَ تَجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ۚ مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِينَ

fī tughyānīhim ya'mahūn.

17. *Ullā'ikalla-dhī-nashṭara-wuq-ḡalūlata bil-hudā, fa mā rabīḥat-tijūratuhum wa mā kūnū muhtadīn.* 18. *Mathaluhum ka-matha-lilla*

16. "Allāh shall requite their mockery,¹ and He lets them go on in their transgression wandering blindly.

17. ^bThese are they who have purchased² error for guidance; but their traffic has brought them no gain, nor have they been guided.

and offsprings of vipers, and styles one of his disciples 'Satan.' (Matt. XVI. 23)

1. According to the Arabic idiom, sometimes punishment for a vice is denoted by the term already used for the vice itself. The Holy Qur-an offers several instances of such uses. We read, for instance, (جزاء سيلة سيئة مثلها (شوري), *i.e.*, "The recompense of evil is evil proportionate thereto" (XLII, 41), although it is obvious that the punishment of evil cannot really be called evil. The verse means that the punishment of evil must be commensurate with the evil itself. Again,

فَمَنْ اعْتَدَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ (بقره) -
i.e., "One who trespasses against you, you may also trespass against him to the same extent. And fear God and remember Him, verily God is with those who try to save themselves from His wrath" (II, 195). In the verse under discussion we find a similar usage. Evidently, the proportionate punishment for trespassing is no trespassing. Punishment can be spoken of as trespassing only when it is an undue encroachment upon the offender or when it is quite out of proportion to the offence. Thus, in the second place, the word *اعتدى* *i'tadā* (trespass) has lost its original sense and means, not 'trespassing,' but 'punishment for trespassing.' The idiom is also to be met with in the pre-Islamic poetry. The well-known Arabic poet, 'Umr bin Kulthūm, says about his foes who were too weak in his estimation:—

أَلَا يَجْهَلُ أَحَدٌ عَلَيْنَا - فَجْهَلُ نَوَقِ جَهْلُ الْجَاهِلِينَ
i.e., "Beware! none should dare employ ignorance against us; otherwise, we will show greater ignorance in our turn," *i.e.*, we will avenge his ignorance, because he has attacked us, though he knew the strength of our arms. Similarly, Abul Haul Tahwi says: فَنَكَبَ عَنْهُمْ دَرَّةً أَلْعَادِي - وَدَاوُوا بِالْجَنُونِ
i.e., "Such a man saved the

tribe against the onslaught of the enemy, and they repulsed madness by madness" (*himāsah*) That is to say, when the foes took the offensive like madmen, they well chastised them with like severity.

Thus, according to the usage of the Holy Qur-an itself and other standard Arabic poets, *الله يستهزئ بهم* should mean "God shall requite their ridicule." The other meaning that "God shall mock at them," as followed by the English translators, is untenable and quite inconsistent with the spirit of the Holy Qur-an. In this very chapter there is related the anecdote of Moses and the Israelites. The former asked the latter to slaughter a cow as God had bidden them do. They asked in wonder:—

أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُوًا "Dost thou make a jest of us."

Moses replied, by saying *أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ* "I seek refuge with Allāh from being one of the ignorant" (v. 68). Moses, of course, meant that jest and ridicule were the marks of ignorance. How can then God attribute to Himself the same thing which He declares through Moses as a practice of the ignorant?

2. The word *اشترى* *ishtirā* (lit. "to purchase") is used here in the sense of 'giving up one thing and taking another instead.' God has given man the power of discriminating between good and evil, but some men lose this power by continued disuse. God says in Ch. XCV. (التين):—

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ۝ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ ۝ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ
i.e., We created man on the best of designs and then reduced him to the lowest condition, but those who remain true to their nature by firmly adhering to right beliefs and doing righteous deeds, far from suffering any degradation, will be the recipients of a rich, unending reward" (XCV, 5-7).

Further on, in verse 17, the question whether or not hypocrites can succeed in life is answered by saying that double-dealing never leads to success in religion; it rather results in dismal failure. For, a hypocrite strives, by practising a fraud upon his enemy, either to inflict a loss on him or guard against his hostile attitude. But as God is all-knowing, the hypocrite cannot go unpunished for his treachery, and his efforts bear no fruit. To make the matter clearer, two

اَسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا ۚ فَلَمَّا اَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللّٰهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ
 فِيْ ظُلُمٍۭتٍ لَاْ يُبْصِرُوْنَ ۝۱۸ صُمُّ بُكْمٌ عُمْيٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُوْنَ ۝۱۹ اَوْ كَصِيبٍ
 مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيْهِ ظُلُمٌۭتٌ وَّسَرَعٌۭ وَّبَرْقٌۭ يَّجْعَلُوْنَ اَصَابِعَهُمْ فِيْ
 اُذَانِهِمْ مِّنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِيْنَ ۝۲۰ يَكَادُ

dhistaugada nārā, falammā aḍā'at mū ḥaula-hū dhaha-ballūhu bi-nūri-him wa taraka hum fī ḡulumātillā yubṣirūn.

19. *Ṣummun bukmun 'umyun fa-hum lū yarjī'ūn.*

20. *Au ka-ṣayyibim-minas-samā'i fī-hi ḡulumātun-wa ra'dun-wa barq, yaj' alūna aṣābi a-hum fī aḡḡāni-him minas-ṣaww'iqi ḡadharal-maut, wa'lāhu muḡīṭum-bil-kāfirin.* 21. *Yakūdul-*

18. "Their case resembles the case of one who kindles a fire; and when it has illuminated all around him, Allāh takes away their light and leaves them in darkness; they see not.¹

19. "They are deaf, dumb, blind; therefore will they not return.²

20. "And³ it resembles a heavy rain from the clouds, wherein is darkness and thunder, and lightning; they put their fingers into their ears because of the thunder-claps, for fear of death; and Allāh encompasses the disbelievers.

In this verse we are given to understand that man is born with faculties best suited for his all-round advancement and that it is his subsequent misuse of them that brings about his degradation. How unfavourably does Christianity compare with Islam in this respect! Islam declares man as originally innocent and sin a fungus of later growth, whereas Christianity holds sin as the heritage of man and, therefore, an essential part of his nature. Thus, reading the verse under discussion with the one quoted above, one can easily infer that the word هدى (guidance) refers to the faculties conferred on man by God, and the term اشتراء *Ishtirā* indicates that the wicked people lose the proper use of their faculties and powers and acquire evil habits instead, which serve them no useful purpose.

1. In this verse the case of the hypocrites is explained by means of an apt illustration. Their case is likened to that of a man who kindles a fire, and when the fire is ablaze and illumines the surroundings, God takes away his sight, and he finds

himself struck with blindness, groping in the dark. To make it clearer, he lights fire to profit by it, but when the fire is ready and there is time for him to derive the intended benefit from it, he is suddenly smitten with loss of vision, and as a result, he is much the worse for it. Even in total darkness he could, of course, have a dim glimpse of the environments but, in his endeavours to enjoy a perfectly clear view, he loses his sight and is plunged in a worse plight, there being no help for him. God points out that such indeed is the case with the hypocrites. They laboriously carry on their machinations, hoping to brighten their prospects, but when everything seems favourable and their object all but attained, chances turn against them and their mischief comes to light. Consequently, they find their lot harder than before.

The following historical events will throw further light on the point. Before the arrival of the Holy Prophet in Medina, there were fierce internecine quarrels going on there. The Jews and the Pagan tribes were

illustrations are set forth which respectively bear on the two classes of hypocrites. In verses 18 and 19 mention is made of the hypocrites who feigned belief in Islam; and again verses 20 and 21 speak of those who were Muslims at heart but who at times exhibited weakness in favour of the disbelievers.⁴ Their present condition, their endeavours, their mis-understandings, and finally, the ultimate fruit of their labours are detailed with utmost vividness.

EXPLANATORY NOTES—continued.

constantly at war with each other. When matters went from bad to worse, the pagan people of Medina saw that their political power was steadily on the wane, which was likely to invite external invasion and thus result in their total ruin. Foreseeing the danger, they determined to put an end to this state of affairs and, as a remedial step, decided to exalt one of them to the dignity of king. 'Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salūl was selected for the office, and the proposal to get ready a crown for him was advanced. Meanwhile, some men of Medina went to Mecca on a pilgrimage and there, influenced by the words of the Holy Prophet, they embraced Islam. On their return home, they took to preaching the new faith they had adopted. More men went to Mecca next year and came back as converts to the new faith. Finding their co-religionists in Mecca in trouble, they persuaded them to come over to Medina, which thus became a place of refuge for the Muslims. In course of time, the Holy Prophet himself had to go over there and nearly the whole pagan population of Medina accepted the Holy Faith of Islam. Civil strife of so old a standing, naturally enough, came to an end and the presence of the Holy Prophet did away with the necessity of any other chief or king. This stung 'Abdullah to the quick, because now no hope was left for him to realise his ambitions for kingship. As a time-serving expedient, he outwardly became convert to Islam, but at heart he remained an enemy to the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of God be upon him! Some of his friends also imitated him and pretended to be Muslims. These hypocrites continued instigating in secret the Jews and other disbelievers to fight against the Muslims, under the impression that the handful of Muslims, unable to fight such heavy odds, would have to disperse and they would be left free to establish their own rule. In fact, such secret instigations led to the battle of Uhud. We learn from reliable historical sources that Ka'b bin Ashraf, one of the Jews who were then allied to 'Abdullah, went to Mecca after the battle of Badr and stirred up the disbelievers there to attack the Muslims, while in Medina 'Abdullah was busy with his perfidious artifices. When the Meccans incited by Ka'b bin Ashraf came to attack the Muslims at Medina and the latter went out to meet them at Uhud, 'Abdullah accompanied by his friends joined with the Muslims, and the moment the Muslim fighters, not more than 1,000 in number, were face to face with the enemy, not fewer than 3,000 strong, 'Abdullah and his friends withdrew from the battlefield, thinking that other men of Medina would also follow their example and retire, and only a knot of *Muhājirs* would be left with the Holy Prophet to fight and be slain by the enemy, in which event he would certainly be proclaimed king. Seeing this unforeseen defection from their side of about one-third of their number under the greatest of their chiefs and noticing their ranks so much thinned thereby, some of the Muslims did naturally lose heart for a while, but soon the force of faith prevailed and the Muslims fought so bravely that the enemy had to retire from the battlefield in despair. The Holy Prophet returned to Medina safe and sound, quite against the expectation of the hypocrites. They had provoked war because they hoped to succeed thereby, but the very conflagration they had set aflame brought to light their secret plots and

conspiracy with the disbelievers. Moreover, they were greatly disconcerted at the safe return of the Holy Prophet, because they had displayed a glaring perfidy and their hypocrisy had become apparent. There was now no loop-hole for the hypocrites to escape.

Turning now to the illustration, they ignited the fire of war to gain their object thereby, and when it was fully ablaze, their perfidious machinations, so long in the dark, were from all sides exposed to the public view and they, instead of profiting, as they had anticipated, by this villainous plot, were stunned at the sight of the Holy Prophet returning free from any harm. Their condition was now more miserable than before, and they were left helpless like blind men groping in the dark.

Some English translators have put forward the objection that in the verse one man is represented as kindling a fire, and further on, when the loss of sight is mentioned, the pronoun is plural. In this connection, it should be understood that while the kindling of fire is done by one of the company, the whole company profits by it. In this particular instance, only one man, their chief, set the fire of war ablaze, but the whole party suffered the consequences; hence, it is quite in keeping with the order of events that a singular pronoun in the case of kindling the fire and a plural pronoun in the case of loss of sight have been used. Sale's note on this verse is erroneous. He considers the sense of the verse incomplete, and proposes, therefore, to add such words as "He turns from it, shuts his eyes, or the like." But it is obvious that the verse as explained above gives a complete sense and the proposal of Sale is an error superposed on another error.

2. This verse tells us that not only were the hypocrites taken aback by their plots turning against them and, like blind men, failed to see any way out of the difficulty, but they also lost all the three faculties necessary for the finding of truth. They were deaf, because they lent no ear to any useful counsel. They were dumb, for they did not speak out their doubts to have them dispelled. They were blind, inasmuch as they could not see the right path. When, by persistently combating the truth, they had permanently paralysed their powers, there was no chance left for them to renounce their evil ways. They were treading the wrong path, because they did not listen to the voice of the guide, nor did they make inquiries, nor again did they see in what direction they were moving.

3. **و** (And) is a conjunction to which later authors have ascribed meanings amounting to twelve. The English translators have rendered it as "or" and thought the verse to mean that either the first mentioned illustration or the next one suits the hypocrites. On careful reflection it would appear that the two illustrations relate to two different classes of men and not to one and the same class, as the translators have thought. The illustrations themselves afford ample evidence to show that they refer to two different classes of hypocrites. *First*, in the first illustration, the hypocrite is said to kindle a fire; but in the second, no action of the hypocrite is referred to, but mention is made of circumstances not created by him. *Secondly*, in the

الْبَرْقُ يَخْطِفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ كُلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَشْوَافِيهِ ۖ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ
عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا ۖ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَارِهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۚ

barqu yakhtafu abṣāra-hum, kullamā aḏā'a la-hum-mashau fī-hi, wa idhā aẓlama 'alaihim qāmu; wa lau shā'allāhu la-dhahaba bi-sam'i-him wa abṣāri-him; innal-lāha 'alū kullī shai'in qadīr.

R. 3.

22. *Yā-ayyuhannū-su'budu rabba-kumulla-dhī khalāqa-kum*

21. The lightning might almost snatch away their sight: " whenever it shines upon them, they walk in it, and when darkness covers them, they halt. And if Allāh willed, He would surely take away their hearing and their sight; verily, Allāh has power over all things.¹

first illustration, we read of the hypocrites losing their sight altogether on the ignition of the fire, while in the second, we read that they walk when there is light but stop when it is dark. *Thirdly*, in the first illustration, they are spoken of as having become blind and deaf, but in the second, we have *ولو شاء الله لذهب بسمعهم وأبصارهم* "If God willed, He would deprive them of their sight and hearing," which shows that their sight and hearing were yet intact. These considerations conclusively prove that the illustrations employed refer to two different classes of hypocrites and, therefore, unlike other translators, we have rendered the word *و* as "and." Nor is this meaning of *و* unsupported by authorities on literature. A poet says:—

لقد زعمت ليلى باي فاجر - لنفسى ثقاها ۖ وعليها فجورها
"Lailā thinks me to be a profligate man. But what of that to her? If I am good, I profit by my goodness and not she; and if I am bad, I alone suffer the consequences."

1. This verse refers to that class of hypocrites who show a divergence between their beliefs and actions, and not to those who are pure pretenders. About the latter it is said that they are blind and hatch conspiracies. The former class is here described as being in constant dread of the troubles that often arise for the Muslims from the general opposition of the disbelievers and, therefore, they remain reconciled to the disbelievers. Owing to the evil fellowship and their own wrong-doings,

even the little faith they have will, as a result, die out and, of course, they will wander away from the right path of guidance. The Holy Qur-ān thus illustrates their case: there is a heavy down-pour from clouds which has made the night pitch dark and there is also thunder and lightning; the cowardly husbandmen (the Holy Qur-ān does not name any class of individuals, yet the illustration would suggest husbandmen) put their fingers into their ears out of fear. They walk whenever there is a glimmer of light, but stop when it is dark. Just as the cowardly husbandmen cannot, through fear, avail themselves of such a highly beneficial and coveted thing as rain, similarly these hypocrites, on account of their cowardice, cannot derive any benefit from Islam. Although Islam is a blessing all in all, yet just as rain is accompanied by thunder and lightning, the acceptance of Islam is attended with a good many difficulties which every heavenly dispensation has to face at the commencement. These men do not hasten to fill their fields with water like a brave husbandman; but like a timid farmer who wishes to water his field but, frightened by thunder and lightning, stops when it is dark and advances a step or two when lightning flashes, these people, being convinced of the truth of Islam, desire to profit by it, but they stop short at every indication of danger, and walk forward at the sight of a success. The little faith they have will, in course of time, vanish, and shorn of all faith, their minds will be swayed by nothing but selfishness, and thus their sight and hearing will be closed against the truth.

الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ²² الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا
وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً²³ وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ
رِزْقًا لَكُمْ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ²³ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ

walla-dhīna min qabli-kum la'alla kum tattaqūn.

23. *Alladhī ja'ala la-kumul-arḍa firūshan-was-samā'a binā'an-wa anzala minas-samā'i mā'an fa-akhraja bi-hi minath-thamarūti rizqal-la-kum, fa-lū taj'alū lillūhi andūdan-wa antum ta'lamūn.*

24. *Wa in kuntum*

R 3.

22. "O ye men, worship your Lord who created you and those who were before you, that ye may be saved ;"

23. Who made the earth a bed for you, and the heaven a vault,² and caused water to come down from clouds,³ and brought forth therewith fruits for your sustenance. Set not up, therefore, equals to Allāh, while ye know.

1. This verse contains an injunction for the worship of one God and the reason for it. Worship means utmost humility and submission. One thing which prompts a person to assume an attitude of humility before another is the intrinsic worth of the latter. Hence, the *first* reason for the worship of God is conveyed in the word رَبِّ (*Rabb*), i.e., the Lord who first brought man and every other thing into existence and then made perfectly suitable provision for their preservation and gradual development to the stage of perfection. The *second* reason why one man should be submissive before another is a sense of personal gratitude due to the benefactor for the kindnesses and favours received. Now, benefactors naturally fall under three possible divisions according as they do kindnesses in the present, past or future, and man assumes an attitude of humility before all the three benefactors. So, by adding رَبِّ to the word *Rabb*, God points out that He is "your *Rabb*" which, as explained above, means one who creates and leads to perfection through various stages of development. This attribute of God covers the present, the past, and the future. But sometimes, the term *Rabb* does not include the idea of creation; therefore, the words الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ 'who created you' have been added to point to the conception of creation. Again, some men feel

grateful to others for the favours received by their forefathers. Hence, God adds that He is the Creator, not only of ourselves but also of our ancestors. Thus, the verse combines in itself all those things which ought to move man to the worship of God. Hence, He alone and none else is worthy of worship. After referring to man's creation and gradual progress towards perfection, the Holy Qur-ān makes mention of those things on which human life depends, adding that these too have been created by God. Thus, completing the fullest measure of Divine favours upon man, the Holy Qur-ān demonstrates clearly that God is the only fit object of worship and that no other being is by any means worthy of it.

2. In the Arabic language سَمَاء *Sama'* (heaven) means 'height.' In the *Lisūn-ul-'Arab*, Vol. XIX, we read, سَمَاءُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ أَعْلَاهُ "The uppermost part of everything is its *Samā'*." Similarly, anything which is above others is termed *Samā'* and hence *Samā'* also means 'the heaven overhead' or 'firmament.' For the same reason, the word is extended to mean 'clouds' and 'rain.' We read in the *Lisūn-ul-'Arab* Vol. XIX, السَّمَاءُ فِي اللُّغَةِ يَقَالُ لِكُلِّ مَا ارْتَفَعَ وَعَلَا قَدْ سَمَاءٌ يَسْمَوْنَ كُلَّ سَقْفٍ فِيهِ سَمَاءٌ وَمِنْ هَذَا قِيلَ لِلْسَّحَابِ السَّمَاءُ لَا نَهَا عَالِيَةً "In the Arabic diction *Samā'* means

So far, the claim of the Holy Qur-an, the object of its revelation, the springing up of the three classes of men—the believers, the unbelievers and the hypocrites, at the time of the Holy Qur-an and their respective fates are explained. In verses 22 and 23 attention is drawn to the fact that all good and blessing lie in an allegiance to the commandments of God, and that rejection of divine behests is met with a severe chastisement, the hypocritical course being also fraught with danger. So these men must adopt a course which is prepared for them by their God—the course of unquestioning submission and unflinching obedience to Him. But as all other faiths of the world also make a common cause with

فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَى عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا
شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۚ فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا

fī raibim-mimmā nazzalnā 'alā 'abdinā, fa'tū bi suratim-mim-milhlihi, wad 'ū shuhadā'a kum-min dūnil-lāhi, in kuntum ṣādiqīn. 25. Fa-il-lam taf 'alū.

24. And "if ye are in doubt as to that which We have sent down to Our servant, then produce a chapter¹ like it, and call upon your helpers² besides Allāh, if ye be truthful.³

a 'height.' The preterite and aorist (tenses) are respectively *Samū* and *Yasmū*. It is used to signify 'a roof' as well as 'clouds' which float high up." The word بناء *binā*, means 'a house,' 'a roof' and 'a structure.' Thus, the words والسماء *wa'l-samā* signify 'And (He made) the firmament a canopy.' The figure employed here suggests that the higher regions are a source of protection for the inhabitants of this planet; and those who have studied the science of the stars, atmospheric conditions, and the phenomena of clouds know full well how far the heavenly bodies, running their courses through the boundless expanse rising high above this planet on all sides, determine the safety of mankind.

3. The word *Samū* is repeated in this verse. Had it been intended to convey the same meaning in both places, in the second place it would have been more idiomatically replaced by a pronoun; so the repetition clearly shows that it is intended to convey a different meaning, in the second place. From the context it is clear that it is used here in the sense of 'clouds.'

1. سورة *Surat* (chapter) literally, a piece, a portion. Here it means a chapter, a section that has been set apart. *Surat* also means 'height.' In keeping with this sense, the chapters of the Qur-ān are called *Surahs* because they contain each a discourse on a lofty subject.

2. شهداء *Shuhadā'* literally, 'helpers,' 'witnesses.' The word taken in the latter sense particularly refers to the Jews who are represented in the Holy Qur-ān as saying:—(النساء) هَؤُلَاءِ أَهْدَى مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا سَبِيلًا (النساء) i.e., "Those unbelievers are better guided than the Muslims" (IV, 52). The Holy Qur-ān says: If you are truthful, call to your help as many men as you can, both of your own people and the Jews.

3. For thirteen long centuries this challenge of the Holy Qur-ān has stood unmet and none has ever dared to produce a parallel to even a chapter of it. No limit is imposed upon the nature of the comparison. The Holy Qur-ān is a religious book and contains all that is in any way serviceable or necessary for the purpose of a perfect moral and spiritual code. Hence, the parallel should cover all the excellences of a religious book, such as the Holy Qur-ān does in all fulness. But, with all their hostility and all the recondite erudition displayed in their reckless criticism of the Holy Qur-ān, our critics have never gathered courage to meet the challenge, nor is there any hope for an attempt being made in this direction in future. The matchlessness of the Holy Qur-ān is thus established in all conceivable respects.

Take guidance, for instance. The guidance embodied in the Holy Qur-ān has cast all other scriptures in the shade. All other books of guidance go to one extreme or another, but the Holy Qur-ān strikes the golden mean which suits all walks of life and all departments of human activities.

As regards a correct conception of God, the Holy Qur-ān describes the attributes of God in a clear and complete manner which is sure to fill all minds with love for God.

As for reasonableness, the Holy Qur-ān makes no statement unattended with proof, and establishes every claim it makes by convincing reasons and cogent arguments.

As for the cure of spiritual maladies, it dispels all unhealthy doubts that can arise in the human mind.

Again, considering the style of the Holy Qur-ān, it is a miracle of comprehensive conciseness. As to its language, it is incomparably sweet and sublime. Referring to its healthy influences, no other book has wielded so powerful an influence over human life. Its guidance has been bearing fruit and fulfilling to this day the highest objects of human life.

the Holy Qur-an in declaring that the commandments of God must be kept, that infringement of His injunctions and neglect of His worship are rigorously punishable, and that hypocrisy bears evil fruit, the question which naturally arises at this juncture is, what is the test of a true religion? To answer this query in favour of the Holy Qur-an it is pointed out in verse 24, as an argument for the truth of the Holy Qur-an and Islam, that like the work of God, the Holy Qur-an, the word of God, also stands absolutely unparalleled. Absolute matchlessness is pre-eminently a divine attribute, no human undertaking being unique in the full sense of the term, and therefore, no human being can claim anything like peerlessness for his handiwork. So the striking argument that drives home the truth of the Holy Qur-an as the word of God, is that no individual, nay, not even the combined force of the whole world, can produce a like of the Holy Qur-an.

وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْتُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ
 لِلْكَافِرِينَ²⁵ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي
 مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رِزْقًا قَالُوا هَذَا
 الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَابِهًا وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَنْزَالٌ
 مُطَهَّرٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ²⁶ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ

wa lan taf 'alū fat-taqun-nāral-latī waqūdu-hānnāsu wal-hijārah, u'iddat lil-kāfirin.

26. *Wa bashshiril-ladhīna āmanū wa 'amiluṣ-ṣāliḥīti anna la-hum jannūtin tajrī min taḥtiha-l-anhār, kullamā ruziqū minhā min thamaratir-rizqan qālū hādhaladhi ruziqnā min qablu, wa utū bi-hi mutashābihā ; wa la-hum fī-hi azwājum-mutahharatun-wa hum fī-hi khālidūn.*

27. *Innal tāha lū yastahyī an-yadriba*

25. But if ye do it not, and by no means shall ye do it, then fear that fire ^a whose fuel is men and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.¹

26. And bear the glad tidings to those who believe and do good deeds, that ^b for them are gardens through which flow streams.² Whenever they are provided therefrom with any fruit to eat, they will say: 'This is that with which we were provided before,' and they shall have its like given to them.³ And therein shall be for them pure spouses,⁴ and therein shall they abide.⁵

If we judge the Qur-ān by the solidarity and permanence of teaching, we see that full thirteen hundred years have gone by, but no science has yet been able to refute even a single point of its teachings, whereas other scriptures have been swept away like straw before the advancing tide of science.

In short, look at it from whatever point of view you will, its unique character cannot fail to strike you. It has stood without a parallel in the past and will continue to stand unrivalled till the last day of the world.

1. That is, your failure to bring forward a parallel to this book will go to prove that it has proceeded from God, because it is infinitely above the collective labours and cumulative efforts of the entire humanity. Such being the case, whoever wilfully refuses to believe in its truth, certainly deserves punishment. The word نَار (nār) used in this verse literally means 'fire'; but it also signifies 'torment,' 'trouble,' or 'warfare.' As the verse does not state whether the word refers to this world or the next, it may be taken to allude to both. Those men who refuse to believe, in the face of clear proofs of the truth of the

Then again, in verse 25 another argument is advanced for the truth of the Holy Qur-an. Just as the defiers of the royal patents are punished, similarly those who refuse to believe in this book, although its truth shines out so clearly, will also be punished by God, which will prove that the book proceeds from Him. The argument is further supplemented in verse 28 that, as the traitors are punished and the faithful are richly rewarded in the administration of government, similarly, the followers of this guidance will be amply requited and will become masters of fertile regions of the globe which will be a distinct proof that the Book is the word of the All-Ruling God of the universe. But as the

EXPLANATORY NOTES—*continued.*

Holy Qur-ān, are hereby warned against the fire which will be fed by men and stones. It is a fact of history that when the non-believers took the offensive against the Holy Prophet and his Companions, their champions were killed and their idols of stones destroyed. As for the next world, all the religions agree in the belief that the torment of hell will be fire.

2. According to Islam, faith and action are inseparable factors in the attainment of salvation—one loses its virtue without the other. This is in perfect accord with human nature. No sane person values a profession of friendship which is not accompanied by friendly deeds; and similarly, friendly deeds without sincerity of purpose are a body without a soul. The gardens and streams promised to the faithful correspond to faith and actions. Gardens stand for faith and streams for actions. The comparison is clear and significant. Just as gardens cannot thrive without streams running through them, similarly, faith cannot flourish without good actions. There is also a delicate implication in the comparison of faith to gardens which we must not miss—that heart being the seat of faith witnesses the beginning of the happiness of heaven. The believer carries a paradise in his heart even in *this* world, and tastes even in his life on earth of the sweet cup of heavenly bliss, which he will drink in a yet fuller measure in the world to come. If, however, we take the word "gardens" literally, the verse gives a good meaning inasmuch as the faithful were even in this world favoured with the richest gardens when they became conquerors. It was an earnest of what they will also enjoy in the next. In the Holy Qur-an we read that the rewards received in this world are a sort of proof for those to be received in the next.

3. This verse makes it clear that the rewards reserved for the faithful will be rich and continuous, one resembling and following the other in succession. Every new reward will put them in mind of the one previously received and enjoyed, and they will say in token of thankfulness, "We have already been in receipt of such rewards."

The word **ثمره** meaning 'fruit' need not be taken literally. It rather refers to the spiritual blessings which the believers enjoy in this very life as the fruits of their labours and good deeds. These spiritual blessings are really blessings not of this but of the next life and are granted to them as a specimen of the bliss that is in store for them in the next life in order to increase their yearning for it; and as the blessed in heaven shall have already tasted of the spiritual blessings in this life, they shall be able to identify the fruits of that life with those of this, and witnessing the close resemblance between the two shall cry out, "These are the fruits which were given us in former life."

In like manner, we may read into the verse the significance that the Muslims will be made to rule

over such countries as abound in gardens and streams. This prophecy met with its fulfilment in one sense when Mecca and Medina came to be supplied with flowing streams, and in another sense when the Muslims conquered countries which were among the most fertile and beautiful regions of the earth, such as the Valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates about which the Holy Prophet said:—

النيل والفوات نهوان من اهورالجنة "The Nile and the Euphrates are two of the streams of paradise." These conquests of the believers followed one after another in quick succession, and were the first fruits of their deeds.

4. As already pointed out in the foregoing note, the Muslim does not look upon paradise as purely an after-death concern, but he believes it to begin in this very world and continue in the next in a more pronounced and fuller state. Consequently, the reward of chaste wives promised to Muslims in paradise must be taken in the same two-fold sense. As to the paradise of the hereafter, the purity of the wives there is absolutely unquestionable, because, as agreed upon by all the faiths extant on earth, evil will have no place there. As regards the paradise of this world, it is a matter of history that the Muslims were favoured with chaste wives. As a matter of fact, adultery becomes rife both among the victors and the vanquished, because soldiers have to stay away from their homes for a long time, but it is surprising to see that, even in the height of victory, the Muslims did not stoop to this evil.

This verse, as well as other similar verses, has been stigmatised by some traducers of Islam as offering to the Muslims the temptation of sensual enjoyment in paradise. The objection is simply absurd. It cannot be denied that a good wife is always a source of purest joy and happiness to man. It is foolish to consider woman as unclean any more than man. If the mutual company of man and woman is a source of pure joy and happiness in this world, why should it not continue to be so in the next. It is impossible to think that the faculties in man will become extinct in the next world. If the company of wife were conducive to nothing but sin, why should man, by nature, be required to resort to it?

5. It is a relative term. It here conveys the idea of everlastingness. Applied to the rewards of paradise, it gives the clear meaning that the rewards of heaven will be never-ending, because there will be endless spiritual advancement there and all possibilities of retrogression will be totally absent. Applied to the rewards of this world, the meaning is equally clear. The Muslims continued to enjoy their well-merited deserts as long as they continued to identify themselves with the essential features of

الذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات "Those who believe and do good deeds."

مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ
 مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا
 يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ²⁷

*mathalam-mā ba'ūdatan fa-mā fauqa-hū, fa-ammalladhīna āmanū fa-ya'lamūna anna-hul
 ḥaqqu mir-rabbi-him, wa ammal-ladhīna kafarū fa-yaqūlūna mā dhā arād-al-lāhu bi-hādhā
 mathalā, yuḍillu bi-hi kathiraṭ-wa yahdī bihi kathira, wa mā yuḍillu bi-hi illal-fāsiqīn.*

27. Verily, Allāh does not refrain¹ from giving a description² little like a gnat³ and what exceeds it.* "And as for those who believe, they know that it is the truth⁴ from their Lord, but as for those who disbelieve, they say, 'What is it that Allāh means by such a description?' Many does He cause to err by it," and many by it does He guide; and none does He cause to err thereby except the rebellious,

* i. e., in
smallness
or
largeness.

1. لا يستحيى (*lā yastahyī*) means "is not ashamed" or "does not refrain" (*Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon*, p. 680, Part II). Some translators of the Holy Qur-ān have adopted the former meaning which cannot be ascribed to God and which does not suit the context. Consequently, the latter meaning has been adopted here.

2. ضرب المثل *ḍarbul-mathal* (ضرب, 'described,' *Tajul-'Arūs*, p. 347, Vol. I; and مثل 'description' or 'parable,' *Lane's Lexicon*, Part VIII, p. 3017) generally means 'to propound a parable,' but it is also used in the sense of making a statement or giving a description, as we read in the Holy Qur-ān (XIV, 47 and XXV, 10).

3. بعوضة (a gnat) is a symbol of littleness. It is derived from بعض *ba'ḍ* which means 'part.' A gnat is called بعوضة because of its very small size. The illustration of a gnat, as employed in this verse, implies that what has been said of paradise in the previous verse is only by way of suggestion, for human language is too weak to convey to our mind any distinct idea of the sweet pleasures which the blessed will enjoy in heaven. God says about heaven: لَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (السجدة) "No soul can conceive the

blessings reserved for it as a reward for its deeds" (XXXII, 18). The Holy Prophet says:—

لَا عَيْنٌ رَأَتْ وَلَا أذنٌ سَمِعَتْ وَلَا خَطَرَ بَقْلٌ بَعْرٌ.
 The bounties of paradise are things "which the eye has not seen, nor has the ear heard, nor has the mind conceived." The only possible mode of description, therefore, is the use of allegory.

To return to the verse under discussion. After giving a description of paradise, God says that although the description given is very brief (as the Arabic word بعوضة 'gnat' implies) and the disbelievers will question the propriety of such a description, yet the believers will thereby be enabled to form some idea of the fuller rewards that are reserved for them in the life to come. Similarly, the rewards which they were to get in this world are also very briefly stated. Those unacquainted with the ways of God inveigh against the use of the metaphor, and demand a detailed description of prophecy in order to appreciate it. In reply to this, God says that, as usual, a brief account is given, but some are guided and others go astray on account of it, and only those go astray who are wicked and rebellious.

4. This clause should not be misconstrued to mean that the Holy Qur-ān was revealed to cause men to

regions reserved for the Muslims are not expressly named and the gardens of the next world are not clearly described, doubting sceptics might here raise an objection that the prophetic utterances are never clear and explicit, and are ever lacking in details. So verse 27 offers a refutation of this objection, signifying that God cannot, for the sake of these silly objections, deviate from His usual course which is rooted in profound wisdom. No doubt prophecies do not embrace details, but the believers know for certain that they must come true some day when all the necessary details will unfold themselves. The objectors fail to comprehend that prophecies serve to distinguish the truth-loving believers from the refractory unbelievers. If the prophecies be as clear as day, then there will be no criterion left for the distinction of the righteous from the unrighteous. It is the new moon and not a full one which serves to distinguish the short-sighted from the keen-sighted.

الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ
 بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ²⁸
 كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمَيِّتُكُمْ ثُمَّ
 يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ²⁹ ۚ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ

28. *Alladhīna yanquḍūna 'ahdal-lāhi mim-ba'di mīthāqihī, wa yaqṭa'ūna mā amaral-lāhu bi-hi an-yūsala wa yufsidūna fil-arḍi, ulā'ika humul-khasirūn.*

29. *Kaifa takfurūna bil-lāhi wa kuntum amwātān fa-ahyā-kum, thumma yumītu-kum thumma yuhyī-kum thumma ilai-hi turj' aūn.* 30. *Huwal-ladhī khalāqa la-kum-mā fil-arḍi*

28. "Who break the covenant of Allāh after the establishing thereof, and cut asunder what Allāh has bidden to be joined, and act corruptly in the earth: it is these that are the losers.

29 How can ye withhold belief in Allah,¹ when ^bye were without life and He gave you life, then will He cause you to die, then restore you to life, and then to Him shall ye return?²

err or that God uses it as a means to make men deviate from the right path, for God says about the Holy Qur-ān:—هو الذي ينزل على عبده آيات بيّنات ليخرجكم من—
 الظلمة إلى النور، وإن الله بكم لرؤف رحيم (الحديد)
 "He it is who has sent down clear signs upon His servant, that He may bring you out of darkness into light; and truly Kind, Merciful to you is Allāh" (LVII, 10). Again He says:—
 يا أيها الناس قد جاءكم موعظة من ربكم وشفاء لما في الصدور
 "O men! now has a warning come to you from your Lord, and a healing for what is in your breasts" (X, 58). It may, however, be pointed out that in the verse under discussion, the action of causing them to err is ascribed to God, because He is the Creator of those things, the opposition of which caused them to go astray from the right path.

1. *kufr bish-shai'* either means 'to deny the existence of a thing' or 'to deny some of the commandments or attributes of a being.' The

expression used in the verse under consideration does not mean 'absolute denial of the existence of God' but of some of His attributes, and also implies the refusal to obey His commandments.

2. In this verse five states of man are mentioned:—*First*, the state when he was lifeless. This refers to the period before he came to have life in the womb of his mother or when his existence was yet latent in matter before his taking shape as spermatozoa in the body of the father. *Secondly*, the animal state, which commences from the time when soul develops in the organism after the latter has gone through different stages. *Thirdly*, the state of death, when the soul leaves the corporeal frame. *Fourthly*, the life beyond the grave, which immediately follows death. This state gradually ripens into the *fifth* and final state which is indicated in the verse *ثم إليه ترجعون* 'Then to Him shall ye return' and which may be called the state of 'return to God,' when man will be called upon to render an account of his deeds.

In verse 28 it is told that the objectors to the prophets are always those who are in the habit of breaking God's commandments and causing disturbance on earth. That is to say, sincere enquirers are never among those who violently oppose the prophets of God.

Here arises another question: what is the need of a revelation from God and why should man expect guidance from God? The question arises from two possible misconceptions:—(1) God is too high to meddle with human affairs. (Some philosophers consider the majesty of God to be opposed to the doctrine of divine revelation). (2) Man does not stand in need of a guidance. Like the rest of the animals, man also needs no guidance and religion. These two erroneous views are rebutted in verses 29 and 30, wherein we learn that the glory and majesty of God is not inconsistent with His revelation, nor are men free from the need of it. If divine revelation had been derogatory to the majesty of God, He would not have created man. When He has, out of lifeless matter, brought into existence a rational being with vast powers and potentialities, there is no reason why the revelation of a law for their regulation should be

جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
 عَلِيمٌ ۚ وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۖ قَالُوا

Ch. :
ع
P. :

jamī'ā, thummas-tawā ilas-samā'i fa-sawwā-hunna sab'a samāwāt; wa huwa bi-kulli shai'in'atim.

R. 4.

31. *Wa idh qāla rabbu-ka lil-malā'ikati inni jā'ilun fil-arḍi khalīfah, qālū*

30. "He it is who created for you all that is in the earth ;¹ and then turned towards the heaven, and into seven heavens did He fashion it ;² and He knows all things.

1. That is, whatever is on the earth has been created by God for the benefit of man. Elsewhere we find the verse: وَسَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِى السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِى الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِّنْهُ إِنَّ فِى ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (البجاذية) i.e., "All that is in heaven and all that is in earth has been made subservient to you, and for the thoughtful there are numerous signs in it" (XLV, 14). Men can profit much by realising that all these things have been created for them.

In short, the attention of the Muslims is drawn to the fact that nothing in the world is useless, that even the smallest thing is useful and has been created by God for the benefit of man. If he ponders over this fact, he can derive much benefit from it. Thus, the verse under discussion read together with the one quoted above makes it clear that not only the things on this earth but also those in other spheres are highly beneficial to man. The influence of the Sun, the Moon, and other heavenly bodies is also of immense benefit to mankind. Modern sciences have discovered many a new mode

of utilising the influence of these heavenly bodies and fresh discoveries are yet being made, which are all so many testimonies to the truth and comprehensiveness of the Holy Qur-ān. Science has also thrown such a flood of light on the properties of the things of this earth that many things which were formerly thought to be useless are now considered highly serviceable to man.

2. In standard dictionaries the word سماء (Sama') is explained as كُلُّ شَيْءٍ أَعْلَاهُ (the uppermost part of everything), or كُلُّ مَا عَلَايَ (every thing above you). Thus سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ *sab' samāwāt* means 'seven heights or altitudes.' As the Holy Qur-ān does not specify the nature of the heights, we are at liberty to take them either in the physical or in the spiritual sense. Taken in the physical sense, the verse means that God has divided the wide expanse overhead into seven spheres. In the spiritual sense, the verse signifies that there are seven spiritual eminences, that is, seven stages in the spiritual development of man as, detailed in Chapter XXIII, 2—9.

beneath His glory. The second objection is answered by the fact that all the things of the world minister to the benefit of man; because the knowledge of how to profit by them is given to man alone. When so many things have been created to promote the comfort of man and to extend the field of his activities and when unlimited provision has been made for his material advancement, can it be supposed that the All-knowing God has created man without any purpose, or that, like other irrational animals, the life of man is also to be free from the bonds of Law? When all the rest of the creation is plainly intended to extend the sphere of his knowledge and actions, it is only right that there should be a set of rules to guide his course of actions and direct his energies into useful channels.

أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ

وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ طَقَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ³¹ وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا

a-taj'alu fī-hā man-yufsidu fī-hā wa yasfikud-dimā'a, wa nahnu nusabbihu bi-hamdī-ka wa nuqaddisu-lak; qāla innī a'lamu mā lā ta'lamūn. 31. Wa 'allama ādamal-asmā'a kulla-hā

R. 4.

31. And when thy Lord said to the angels : ^a 'I am about to place a vicegerent¹ in the Earth,' they said : 'Wilt Thou place therein such as will cause disorders in it, and shed blood,² and we declare Thy sanctity with Thy praises, and extol Thy holiness?' He said, 'I know what ye know not.'

1. The original word خليفة (*Khalifah*) means one who succeeds or precedes another. The word also means, one who puts the laws and the commands of the king into force. Thus, the application of the word *Khalifah* to Adam in the verse enables us to make three inferences : *First*, God's creation did not commence with Adam, as is commonly supposed, but Adam himself was the representative of some creation that previously existed. *Secondly*, Adam's progeny will increase and multiply and spread over the face of the globe. *Thirdly*, Adam, being himself good and righteous, will invite men to submit to the Law of God.

2. A vicegerent is needed only when there is some danger of mischief and disturbance. So, when God informed the angels that He was to appoint a *Khalifah* (vicegerent) on the earth, the angels inferred that, with the appointment of a خليفة (*Khalifah*), God will also bring into being a

creation which will shed blood and disturb the peace of the earth. Hence, in order to be fully enlightened on the matter, they enquired of God whether He would create on earth also such beings as would cause bloodshed and disturbance. This inquiry from the angels does in no way indicate, as is erroneously supposed, any spirit of criticism or dissatisfaction on their part. Nor can it be supposed to imply any desire on the part of the angels for being called to the exalted office of the vicegerent on the ground of their being more deserving of that honour. This is amply borne out by the following words which the angels added to their inquiry : "وَعِن نَسْبِحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ" We believe Thee to be free from all defects, worthy of all praise, and the sole possessor of all goodness," meaning that their question was not by way of finding fault with His work, but by way of seeking greater knowledge of the nature and wisdom of the appointment. So, God spoke in reply : "The wisdom underlying this is above your comprehension ; and I alone know it."

Here another question crops up for solution. If a guidance was necessary for man, why did it come to him so late? Why was it not sent when man had just come into being or, at least, when he first learnt to lead a social life? These questions have been answered in verses 31-40 as follows : The Holy Qur-an is not the first Law, but that the Laws were given to man at the very beginning of his creation.

ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
صَادِقِينَ ۝ قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ

thumma 'araḍa-hum 'alal-malā'ikati fa-qāla ambi'ūnī bi-asmā'i hā'ulā'i in kuntum šādiqīn.

33. *Qālū subḥāna-ka lā 'ilma lanā illā mā 'allamtā-nā, inna-ka antal-'alīm-ul*

32. And He taught Adam "the names," all of them ; then He set them before the angels and said : ' Tell Me the names of these, if ye are right.' "

1. We are not told what those names are. A careful study of the Holy Qur-an, however, reveals the fact that there are some names with which a Muslim must be acquainted for the sake of his perfection. These are such as he himself cannot devise. They can be learnt from God alone. In Chapter VII, God says: *ولله الاسماء الحسنی فادعوه* *بها واذروا الذين يلحدون في اسمائه ط سيجزون ما* *كانوا يعملون (الاعراف)* *i.e., "For Allāh there are perfect attributes (Asma'). Call, then, upon Him by those attributes and quit those who call upon Him by their self-invented names, not in keeping with His Majesty. They will soon meet with the retribution of their deeds"* (VII, 181). This verse shows that the word *Asma'* (names) is used to denote the attributes of God and that Muslims must be familiar with those attributes, so that they may pray to Him with special reference to the attributes most suited to the nature of the prayer. For example, if one prays for forgiveness and mercy, one should call upon God by such of His names as embody the attributes of forgiveness and mercy; and if the prayer be for righteousness, God should be invoked by such of His names as express that quality. Similarly, this verse clearly indicates that man must not of himself devise the attributes of God, because those who do so have been threatened with divine punishment.

In short, we learn from this verse that the Muslims are bound to know some *Asma'* (names) which are taught by God alone, and which none other has a right to devise out of his own fancy. There is now strong evidence in favour of the interpretation that God gave Adam a knowledge of His attributes. The view gains further strength when we take into consideration the obvious difference between man and angel. In the light of the principles laid down in the Holy Qur-ān, man differs from angels in the fact that whereas the former can be an image of all Divine attributes, the latter represents only a few of them, as we learn from the verse, *ما يؤمرون ما يؤمرون (تحریم)* *i.e., "They, the*

angels, do what they are bid to do" (I.XVI, 7), which implies that they cannot act of their own free will. They have no independent will of their own, but passively perform the functions allotted to them by Providence. On the other hand, man, endowed as he is with volition and free choice, differs from angels in that he has in him the capabilities of being a perfect manifestation of all Divine attributes. A saying of the Holy Prophet *تخلقوا باخلاق الله* also points to this very end. It means: Develop in you such qualities as are akin to the attributes of God. As God is Merciful, you should also show mercy to all; as He is Forgiving, so you must also be ready to forgive your fellowmen; as He connives at faults, so you must imitate Him in this particular; and as He protects the weak, so you must be ready to protect the weak. This injunction of the Holy Prophet justifies the inference that man has the capability to manifest in himself all the attributes of God. Thus, both the Holy Qur-ān and the Holy Prophet's sayings concur to prove that man and angel differ in the manifestation of Divine attributes, and the verse, "He taught Adam the names," refers to the attributes of God and means that God first implanted in Adam free will and the needful capacity for the comprehension of Divine attributes, and then gave him the knowledge of those attributes, which was impossible without the power of assimilating it.

2. *صدقت (Ṣadaqla)* sometimes means: You are speaking a truth, *i.e.,* not a lie; but it also means: What you say is right, not wrong. Here, in this verse the word is used in the latter sense, which is thus given in the *Tajul-'Arūs*, Vol. VI, p. 406:

صدقني فلان *اے قال لي الصدق*

i.e., صدقني فلان means: "What he has said to me is right." Similarly we learn from a tradition that the Angel Gabriel asked the Holy Prophet a certain question which the latter answered. Thereupon, the angel said to the Prophet: *صدقت* *i.e.,* "What you say is quite right" (*vide* Bukhārī and Muslim).

الْحَكِيمُ ۚ قَالَ يَا دُمْ أَنْبَهُهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَاهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ ۝³³

أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ

وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ۝³⁴ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا

hakim.

34. *Qāla yā Ādamu ambī'hum bi-asmā'i-him, fa-lamma amba'a-hum bi-asmā'i-him, qāla a-lam aqul-la-kum innī a'lamu ghaibas samāwāti wal-ardī, wa a'lamu ma tubdūna wa mā kuntum taktumūn.*

35. *Wa idh qulnā lil-malā'ika-tisjudū li-Ādama fa-sajadū illā*

33. They said, 'Holy art Thou! No knowledge is in us but what Thou hast taught us; verily Thou art the Knowing, the Wise.'

34. He said, 'O Adam, tell them their names;' and when he had told them their names, He said: 'Did I not say to you, I know the secrets of the heavens and of the earth, and I know what ye reveal and what ye conceal?'¹

1. God then presented Adam and his progeny before the angels and reminding them of what they had said, *viz.*,—the appointment of a vicegerent on earth pre-supposed the creation of such beings as he might rule over and as might have capacity for evil—God asked them whether they could reflect in their life and being the complete image of His attributes, whether He could fully reveal Himself in and through them, and whether they could enumerate the qualities implanted in Adam and his children; if not, the creation of Adam and his appointment as vicegerent were also necessary. And as the angels were conscious of their nature and constitution, they frankly confessed that they were unable to reflect God's attributes in their totality—they could reveal only such of His attributes as He, with His good pleasure, had given them the power of revealing. On this, Adam, in obedience to the Divine will, manifested all the capabilities ingrained in him and showed to the angels the extensiveness of his capacities. Thus, manifesting in himself all the attributes of God, man proved the necessity of a being who might secure from God the power of will; who, putting his powers under His will, might, without any external compulsion, take to sinning or righteousness; and who might thereby reveal to the world the greatness and glory of God.

As to the words: *وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ* (and I know what ye reveal and what ye conceal) which God spoke about the angels, they simply mean that He knew their visible as well as invisible powers, *i.e.*, although they were the noblest of the existing creatures, yet even they could not do what man was to do, inasmuch as he was to be the complete manifestation of all Divine attributes. It will be a gross error to take the words, "What ye reveal and what ye conceal" as signifying that the angels were not true and sincere before God and that they tried to dissemble. Such a meaning is absurd. The only legitimate meaning is that God knows what the angels have been doing and what they are capable of doing.

Note.—This conversation between God and angels and Adam need not necessarily be taken in a literal sense. It is not necessary that the dialogue should have actually taken place. Sometimes the practical upshot of events is portrayed in the form of a telling speech, and spoken words are ascribed to things incapable of speech. The purpose of such personification is only to show the existing condition of the thing personified. A poet says:—*قالت له العينان* *i.e.*, "Both of his eyes said that they would listen and obey." Thus, it is clear that the conversation embodying the story of Adam suggests a picture of the events.

35
 إِبْلِيسُ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ ۖ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ۝ وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ
 أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرُبَا
 هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝ 36
 فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا

Iblīs, abā was-takbara wa kāna minal-kāfirin.

36. *Wa qulnā yā Adamus-kun anta wa zaujukal-jannata wa kutū-minhū raghadan haithu shi'tumā, wa lā taqrabā hādhi-shih-shajaratata fa-takūnū minaz-ẓālimin.*

37. *Fa-azalla-humash-ṣḥaiṭanu 'anhū*

35. And ^a (remember) when We said to the angels, 'Fall prostrate for Adam';¹ and prostrate fell they, save Iblīs; he refused and behaved arrogantly; and became one of the disbelievers.²

36. And ^b We said: 'O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in the garden,³ and eat ye therefrom plentifully wherever ye will, but approach not this tree,' lest ye be among those who wrong themselves.'⁴

1. *استجدوا لآدم* does not mean, "fall prostrate before Adam," because it is not lawful to do so before any creature. The Holy Qur-ān says:

لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ
 (هم السجدة) "Do not fall prostrate before the Sun nor before the Moon, and fall prostrate before God alone who created them" (XLI, 38). Thus, the worship of Adam is opposed to the teachings of the Holy Qur-ān, and such a command could never proceed from God. The letter J in the verse under discussion means "for." So, the verse may be explained thus: On creating Adam, God ordered the angels to fall prostrate before Him for this manifestation of His glory and power.

The term *سجدة* (*sijdah*) also signifies 'obedience' and 'submission.' Taken in this sense, the order refers to Adam and means that God bade the angels serve Adam, that is, assist him in his mission. In this way the angels are ordered to serve all the Prophets and the Messengers of God, their chief duty being to protect the person of the prophet and to draw the hearts of men towards Him.

2. *Iblīs* was not one of the angels because the Holy Qur-ān says about them:

لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ (تحریم)
 "They never do aught against God's bidding, but they do what they are ordered to do" (LXVI, 7). Hence, *Iblīs* could not be an angel. The objection why God was angry with *Iblīs*, whereas the commandment of bowing in submission was meant for the angels and not for him, is baseless, for, elsewhere the Holy Qur-ān says: (امرأته) ما منعك إلا تسجداً

"Why did ye not fall prostrate when I bade ye do so" (VII, 13). This shows that *Iblīs*, though not an angel, was also ordered to bow down for Adam. Moreover, even if there were no separate commandment for *Iblīs*, the one for angels extended over all others, because the orders given to angels are meant to be put into force among all creatures. Hence, the commandment for angels was meant for all creatures, and whoever disobeyed the commandment deserved punishment.

3. *Jannat* (garden) means "A place over-shadowed by trees." Hence, a garden or a place overgrown with trees is called *Jannat*. The place where believers will be made to abide after death is also termed *Jannat*, because therein the believers will dwell under the shady trees, and Divine mercy will also over-shadow them. But it should be noticed that the locality where Adam is ordered to live is not the one where the believing souls will go after death, for as we are told in Chapter XV, 49, where the story of Adam is described, no believer is expelled from the abode of bliss after he has once been admitted into it. But we see that Adam had to quit the place where he was at first made to dwell, which shows that it must have been some beautiful spot here on the earth, and verse 31 of this chapter also supports the same view. Recent researches go to show that the garden of Eden where Adam was made to dwell lay near Babylon.

4. We cannot undertake to define *شجرة* *shajarah* (tree), as the Holy Qur-ān has left it undefined. According to the Bible, it was the tree of knowledge, as man came to have a knowledge of good and evil, having eaten of its fruit. But we learn

فَاَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطْ اَبْعَضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٍّ وَلَكُمْ
 فِي الْاَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ اِلٰى حَيْنٍ فَتَلَقٰٓ اٰدَمُ مِنْ رَّبِّهِ كَلِمٰتٍ

fa-akhrajahumā mimmā kānā fī-hi, wa qul-nahbiṭū, ba'du-kum li ba'din 'aduww, wa la-kum fil-ardī mustaḡarrun-wa matā'un ilā hīn. 38. *Fā-talaqqā Adamu-mir-Rabbi-hi kalimātīn*

ر. با = من
 ر. ها re-
 شجرة to
 it. caused
 them to go
 ut.

37. But "Satan made them slip by* means of it,† and drove‡ them from what they were in.¹ And We said, "Depart ye,² some of you enemies of others, and 'for you there is an abode in the earth and a provision for a time."³

from the Holy Qur-ān that Adam and his spouse became naked after having eaten of the forbidden fruit, that is to say, the tree was a source of evil which made Adam exhibit a weakness. The Quranic view is evidently correct, because to deprive man of knowledge was to defeat the very purpose for which he was brought into being. We learn from Genesis that Adam named the animals and other things on the earth. How could it then be that God withheld the tree of knowledge from him. Leaving aside these differences, the Holy Qur-ān and the Bible seem, however, to agree on the point that the tree was not a real one, but that it symbolized something else, because no tree with either of the above characteristics exists on the face of the globe. So, the tree represents some other thing.

In the Qur-ān the word *shajarah* is also used to mean a quarrel, as in the verse :—

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يَكُونُ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ (نساء)
i.e., "By thy Lord, these men will never become believers until they make you a judge in all their quarrels" (IV, 66). Again, elsewhere the Holy Qur-ān makes mention of two kinds of *shajarah*: one شجرة طيبة (pure tree) and the other شجرة خبيثة (evil tree). The pure things and pure teachings are likened to the former, and impure things and impure thoughts are compared to the latter. In the light of these Quranic explanations, the verse means, (1) that Adam was forbidden to quarrel; (2) that Adam was warned against evil things, because although the verse does not specify evil or good *shajarah*, yet the prohibition cannot but refer to impure things and evil thoughts.

5. The Arabic word ظالم (*ẓālim*) is derived from ظلم (*ẓulm*) which has three meanings: *First*, it means وضع الشيء في غير محله *i.e.*, 'putting a thing in a wrong place or in a place not its own.' *Secondly*, انقص الحق *i.e.*, 'to make one suffer loss.' *Thirdly*, تعدى or جور *i.e.*, 'to transgress the proper limit.' Here when a command is first mentioned and the word *ẓulm* is used to signify its breach, the first of the three meanings seems to be appropriate. The phrase would thus mean that the result of approaching the *Shajarah* would be that he (Adam) would become one of those who do not observe the propriety of time and place in their actions.

1. That is, a doomed being enticed Adam away from the place where he was and thereby deprived him of the comforts he enjoyed. It must be noted that one who brought trouble on Adam is named *Shaiṭān* and not *Iblīs*. This distinction is to be found not only in the verse under discussion, but the Holy Qur-ān invariably speaks of *Iblīs* while mentioning the incident of refusal to bow down through pride, and of *Shaiṭān* wherever mention is made of the instigation of Adam to eat of the *shajarah*. This distinction points to the conclusion that the word *Shaiṭān* does not here refer to *Iblīs*. The inference is further supported by the verse :—

ان عبادي ليس لك عليهم سلطان (بني اسرائيل)

"Verily, as to my servants, thou shalt have no power over them" (XVII, 66). As Adam was a vicegerent of God, *Iblīs* could have no power over him, and hence the being who put Adam to trouble was some one else. So, in order to bring out this fact, the word *Shaiṭān* which has a wider significance than *Iblīs* has been used here. According to the Holy Qur-ān, *Iblīs* is the name of the unclean soul that instils evil ideas into the minds of evil-doers as they grow in their wrong-doing, just as angels prompt virtue; whereas *Shaiṭān* is the name given to any being that has fallen away from the truth or is doomed to perish, be it *Iblīs*, some man or some other troublesome animal.

2. The original word اهبطوا signifies "putting up," or "encamping" at a certain place. With the preposition من (*min*) it means 'to depart' as الوادي من (*min*) it means 'He went forth from the valley' (Abul Baqā, p. 350). But Arabic grammar permits of the preposition being understood. Thus, the word اهبطوا here could bear a duality of meanings: *First*, "put up." *Secondly*, "depart." Further on, we read اهبطوا منها which signifies merely "go out of it." This clause explains the verse under discussion and substantiates the second meaning of اهبطوا. Thus, اهبطوا لبعضكم بعضا means: "depart ye, some of you enemies of others."

3. This verse shows that the Holy Qur-ān lends no support to the idea of any body going to heavens alive. It clearly fixes the earth as the life-long abode of man. Thus, the Holy Qur-ān does not agree with those who hold that Jesus ascended to heavens alive.

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قَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ قُلْنَا اهْبِئْ مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فَأَمَّا
 39 يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

a-tāba 'alaih ; inna-hū huwat Tawwābur-Rahīm.

39. *Qulnahbiṭū minhū jamī'ā, fa-immū ya'tiyanna-kum-minnī hudan fa-man tabi'a hudāya a-lā khaufun 'alaihim wa lū hum yahzanūn.*

38. Then "Adam learnt from his Lord certain words, and He turned to him with mercy; verily He is the Compassionate, the Merciful.¹

39. And We said: ^b Depart ye all hence; and ^c if guidance comes to you from Me, then whoso shall follow My guidance, on them shall come no fear,* nor shall they grieve †.²

* Ar. خَوْف
Khauf =
 fear about
 the future.

† Ar. حَزَن
(Huzn) =
 regret for
 the past
 and fear of
 the future.

1. The Holy Qur-ān tells us that when *Shaiṭān* deceived Adam, and God informed him of his mistake, he prayed to God for forgiveness in these words: رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا وَإِن لَّمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَذَكُونٌ (اعرف) "O Lord! Indeed, we have wronged ourselves, and if Thou dost not forgive us and have mercy on us, we shall surely be of the losers" (VII, 24). This was the prayer he learnt from God. His prayer was heard and he was forgiven.

This verse leads to an important inference. Prayers that are highly efficacious in moving the mercy and compassion of God are those which are offered in the very words taught by God. In fact, man cannot, by force of intellect, know the will of God as certainly as when He Himself reveals it. Only that prayer leads most to success which is taught by God Himself. Man often devises modes and words of prayer, but very often they are so faulty and foolish, that instead of being a prayer for, they become a prayer against, the supplicator. We do not mean to say that man should not pray in his own words, but what we mean is, that man should establish such close connection with God that, in time of need and trouble, God may Himself teach him, as He did in the case of Adam, a prayer which may be the means of drawing out His mercy.

2. This verse holds out a promise that, among the descendants of Adam, such great souls will continue to appear as will invite people to truth and guidance, and those who will follow such holy ones will enter paradise even in this world, *i.e.*, their hearts will be so filled with faith that they will enjoy tranquillity of mind in all circumstances. No fear about future failures or regret about past losses will trouble them and thus their hearts will be to them a paradise. On the other hand, those who will set

aside the guidance of God will fall into a fire and will never enjoy inward happiness and satisfaction of mind, however rich and wealthy they may happen to be. In the next world too, both classes of men will have the retribution and reward of their deeds.

There are two things worth particular mention in connection with the story of Adam as given in the Holy Qur-ān. In the *first* place, although this story pertains to a certain individual, yet God has put it in a form which enables every believer to apply it to his own case and to deduce moral lessons therefrom. This is why at some places it loses the form of a narrative, but is related in words of general application; as for instance, the nature of *Asmā'* is not defined, the *Shajarah* is not specified, and the deceiver of Adam is described by the generic name of *Shaiṭān*. In short, by such generalisations, God has changed it from a story into a moral lesson. Indeed, it is a special feature of the Holy Qur-ān that whenever it relates a story, it does so in a manner calculated to afford spiritual instruction and benefit to mankind and does not put it like a mere story. Adam's story is to be looked upon in the same light. Every man that is born is Adam, and the angels, who are the media for the maintenance of the spiritual order and organisation of the world, are directed to help him in his efforts for higher life. All things under the control of angels are helpful to human life and promote human comfort. But there are some wicked persons who envy the happiness of their fellow beings and, playing the part of *Shaiṭān*, they attempt to drive them out of the spiritual paradise in which every man is placed at his birth. But he who turns to God and seeks His assistance in times of trouble, succeeds at last and finds himself secure from all fear and danger. On the other hand, he who does not follow the example of Adam and, spurning the guidance of

Ch. 4.

ع 40

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P. 4.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

40. *Walladhīna kafarū wa kadhdhabū bi āyātinnā ulā'ika aṣḥābun-nār, hum fī-hā khālidūn.*

40. But "they who disbelieve and treat Our signs as lies, these are the inmates of the Fire, wherein they shall abide."

God, becomes reconciled to *Shaiṭān*, gets into trouble and ultimately finds himself among the lost. Every new day repeats the same story, but the fool who cavils at Adam for his unintentional mistake, is blind to his own reckless condition, in which he is hourly following the promptings of *Shaiṭān* that dwells in his breast.

The *second* fact which needs mention in this connection concerns the English translators of the Holy Qur-ān. In their explanatory notes, they have given many false and baseless stories which are not at all warranted either by the Holy Qur-ān or by the traditions of the Holy Prophet. One can only pity such impudence which would ascribe to Islam things that are neither supported by the Holy Qur-ān nor countenanced by the Holy Prophet.

Any sane person who ponders a little over the words of the Holy Qur-ān will be convinced that the foolish stories fathered upon Islam by Sale and Wherry and others in their notes on the translations of the Holy Qur-ān are not at all supported by the Holy Qur-ān, and cannot, therefore, be laid to the charge of Islam. Had these stories been authenticated by reference to the sayings of the Holy Prophet, they could have been worthy of credence. But the fairy tales, which are neither found in the Holy Qur-ān nor in the traditions of the Holy Prophet, cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be ascribed to Islam. As a rule, some false stories do sometimes find currency among the followers of every religion. No religion can be pointed out as an exception. Take Christian religion, for instance. Such a cloud of false stories and silly fables has gathered round it that the horizon has become grievously gloomy, rendering it hopelessly difficult to discover the original faith from the mass of accretions. For the advocates of such a system to attempt to foist a few myths about Islam and to present the same before an unsuspecting public, who, by reason of their lack of acquaintance with the authentic Islamic literature, are unable to verify their statements, cannot but be branded as dishonest. They

forget Christ's teaching about the beam in the eye. Christian literature, both canonical and apocryphal, will furnish twenty stories to each one quoted by these detractors of Islam—stories for which, by the admission of the detractors themselves, the Muslims claim no divine or traditional source. What is most curious is that the stories objected to by the Christian translators have been derived from their own and Jewish traditional writings. The objections should, therefore, recoil upon themselves and the Jews. The only fault of the Muslims is that they were simple enough to quote these silly and false stories to explain the pure and pregnant words of the Holy Qur-ān.

1. *هم فيها خالدون* "Wherein they shall abide," does not here mean that they will remain in hell for ever, as all the English translators of the Holy Qur-ān have put it. Islam does not believe in the eternity of hell, but looks upon it as a hospital where men will be sent for cure. The God of Islam is not vindictive, and does not delight in inflicting punishment on His creatures, but on the other hand, such punishment is intended for the reformation of the creatures themselves. Neither the inflictions of this world nor those of the next are meant to satisfy His desire for revenge, but both here and hereafter, the underlying purpose of punishment is to heal and cure, so that when this purpose will have been fulfilled, punishment will be unnecessary. Accordingly, Islam gives us to understand that there will come a time when all the dwellers of hell will leave it for paradise.

As to our meaning of *خلد* i.e., "to abide long," we refer the reader to the *Kulliyāt* of Abul Baqā, p. 165, in which he writes:—

في الاصل الثبات المديد دام ام لم يدم

i.e., it means "staying for a long period and not necessarily for ever." Also see *Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon*, Part II, pages 783 and 784.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا اِسْرَآءِیْل اذْكُرْ وَاِغْثٰی الَّتِیْ اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَیْكُمْ وَاَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِیْ
 اَوْفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَاِیَّایْ فَارْهَبُوْا ۚ وَاٰمِنُوْا بِمَا اَنْزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا

R. 5.

41. *yā Banī Isrā'ī-ladḥkurū nī'mati-yallatī an'amtu 'alai-kum wa aufu bi-'ahāi ūfi bi-'ahdi kum wa iyyūya farhabūn.* 42. *Wa āminū bi-nūi anzaltu muṣaddīqal-limā*

R. 5.

41. O ye children of Israel ! Remember "My blessing which I blessed you with,¹ and fulfil 'your covenant with Me, that I may fulfil My covenant with you,'² and Me alone do ye fear.

1. God has pointed out in detail elsewhere in the Holy Qur-an as to what those blessings were that were conferred on the Israelites. He says:—

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ إِذْ كُنُوا آلَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ أَذْ
 جَعَلَ نَبِيًّا مِنْكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مَلَكًا وَأَنْتُمْ مَالِمُ يَزِيدُ أَحَدًا
 مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ (مائدة)

i.e., Remember when Moses said to his people: "My people! Continue remembering the favours with which God has blessed you and that is the raising of prophets from among you, and constituting you a ruling nation, thus giving you what He has not given to any other people" (V. 21). This verse shows that the best of God's rewards are prophethood and sovereignty, both of which were conferred upon the Israelites. The same favours were also promised to the Muslims, and the promise has been fulfilled to the very letter. Accordingly, as the Mosaic dispensation saw its consummation in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, similarly the Muhammadan dispensation has been consummated in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian.

2. In Genesis XVII, we read of the covenant that was established between God and Abraham, the outward token of which was declared to be circumcision of the flesh of the foreskin (XVII, 11), symbolic of inner holiness. God made Abraham

an heir to divine blessings and made great promises also for the seed of Abraham, provided they kept the covenant. The Jews, however, preserved the outer form, but abandoned the spirit. This led to their rejection of Jesus Christ and the forfeiture of the promised favours. The Christians in their turn left off both outward as well as inward holiness and thereby fell under the divine threat: "And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant" (Gen. XVII, 14).

After Abraham the covenant was renewed with the sons of Israel. This second covenant is well-known and is mentioned in the Bible in several places.

Reading Ex. XX, and Deut. V and XVIII, 18, 19 together, we find that God gave Moses on the top of Mount Sinai (or Horeb, as Mount Sinai is called in Deut.) the Ten Commandments and made a covenant with the Israelites (Deut. V, 2, 3). They were commanded to keep the covenant thus: "Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess" (Deut. V, 33). When these commandments were being revealed, and the glory of God was manifesting

Further, as there are men who deny the necessity of revelation after it has once been received in the early days of the world, it is clearly stated that the revelations have continued to be vouchsafed afresh from time to time till the appearance of the Holy Prophet. The last people who enjoyed the privilege of Divine revelations were the Israelites. They had enjoyed the favour for a long time and had come to think that their tribe would remain the exclusive seat of Divine revelations till the last days of the world. The Holy Prophet, the recipient of the Quranic revelations, did not, however, belong to this tribe. It was, therefore, necessary to point out why the privilege was withheld from the Israelites who had enjoyed it for centuries. So, these and other incidental matters have been dealt with in verses 41-125. A detailed exposition of these verses will be given below. It should, however, be noted here that, while dwelling upon these points, the Holy Qur-an has, as usual, enlivened the discourse by frequent exhortation to virtue and godliness, so that the minds of men might be filled with the awe of God and be purified of perversity and obstinacy.

In verse 41 these questions have been answered in brief. Instead of pointing out that even quite recently there were raised from among the Israelites prophets for the regeneration of the world which proved that the revelation of God had never come to an end, a more emphatic mode of address has been resorted to. The address is made to all the Israelites directly and their attention is drawn to the fact that they cannot afford to deny the recurring character of Divine revelation because they themselves were the recipients of it. By adding the words "Fulfil your covenant with Me that I may fulfill My covenant with you," it is pointed out that the Jews had broken their covenant and were therefore deprived of the favour they had enjoyed for generations.

مَعَكُمْ وَلَا تَكُونُوا أَوَّلَ كَافِرِينَ ۖ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا زَوَايَا
فَاتَّقُونِ ۚ وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ۚ

ma'a-kum wa lā takunu 'awwala kūfirim-bih, wa lā tashtarū bi-āyātī Ṭhamanan qatīlanwa iyyāya fat-taqūn.

43. *Wā lū talbisul-ḥaqqā bil būṭilī wa taktumul-ḥaqqā wa antum ta'lamūn.*

42. And "believe in what I have sent down, 'verifying that which is with you,' and be not the first to withhold belief in it, and 'barter not My signs for a small price,' and of Me* alone then beware.

* i. e., My
'punish-
ment.

43. And "confound not the truth with falsehood, nor hide the truth, while ye know.³

Itself on Mount Sinai, "All the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking" (Ex. XX, 18). The Israelites, who had come out of their camp to make a covenant with God, and who were then standing at the foot of the mountain, were terrified, and they said to Moses: "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die" (Ex. XX, 19). Thereupon, God said to Moses that they had well spoken what they had spoken, that they would be blessed as long as they would act upon those commandments (Deut. V, 29), but in future when there would appear a prophet like Moses (*viz.* a Law-giver), he would be from among their brethren (that is to say, not from among the Israelites) Deut. XVIII, 18. Though Moses said, "God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren" (Deut. XVIII, 15), yet in the first place, it runs counter to the word which God had sent to Moses and which does not include the phrase "from the midst of thee" but only says: "of thy brethren."

Secondly, the phrase, "from the midst of thee, of thy brethren," is quite meaningless. When all the Israelites were addressed, it was superfluous to add "of thy brethren" to "from the midst of thee." When it was said to the Israelites that a prophet would be raised from among their brethren, it was implied that the prophet would belong to some other people and not to the Israelites. If, on the other hand, the prophet was to be raised from among the

Israelites, he could not be said to have come "from among their brethren."

Thirdly, raising the prophet from among their brethren was by way of punishment and there could be no punishment if the prophet were raised from them. We read in Deut. XVIII, 16-18: "According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire anymore that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee and will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." It appears from the above quotation that as the Israelites had refused to listen to the divine word containing law, God said that He would never raise any Law-giver from among them in future and that when another prophet 'like unto' Moses would be raised, he would be from among their brethren.

In conformity with the second covenant, the Israelites continued to receive from God both worldly and spiritual bounties. As for the elevation of their spiritual life, prophets continued to appear among them, but they brought no separate book of their own. As regards worldly life, they enjoyed temporal power, and excepting a brief interval, they continued to hold sway over the holy land, although, after the advent of Jesus, it passed into the hands of Christians.

In verse 42 it is added that now the only way for the Israelites to become again the heirs to the blessing is to join the renewed covenant, otherwise they will fall away from God.

EXPLANATORY NOTES—continued.

so, in the verse under discussion God calls the attention of the people of the Book to this covenant in which He promised them a blessed life on condition of strict adherence to the covenant. God was prepared to make good His promise, provided they on their part kept the covenant.

1. We learn from the Bible that the prophets of old had foretold the advent of a prophet who would be for the whole world and not for the Israelites alone. (*Vide* Isaiah XLII, 1—6; LV, 4 and 5; LVI, 5—7). If we study the lives of prophets, it will become clear to us that it is part of a prophet's mission to testify to the truth of the previous prophets. Every Israelite prophet attested the truth of his predecessors. So, according to the usual practice of prophets, it was necessary for this prophet, too, to bear witness to the truth of all the prophets who had gone before him in all ages and in all places. Hence, the prediction of a prophet for the whole world was only another way of foretelling the appearance of a prophet who would vouch for the truth of all prophets of the world, just as each Israelite prophet did for all the previous prophets of the Israelite line. As his prophet was for the whole world, it was, therefore, only natural that for his rejection all the peoples of the world should be punished and the disbelievers should incur the wrath of God, as we read in Isaiah LX, 12: "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations will be utterly wasted"; and again, in Deut. XVIII, 19: "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which he shall speak in My name, I will require it of him."

The Holy Qur-ān presents to the world the Holy Prophet of Arabia as that universal prophet.

It says:—

وَإِذَا حَذَّاءُ اللَّهِ مِمَّا قَالُوا لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ
لَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِمَّنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ
قَالَ أَقْرَبْنِي وَأَحْدِثْ عَلَيَّ دَلِيلًا أَصْرِي ط قَالُوا
أَمْرًا ط فَلْأَتَاهُ وَأَمَّا مَعَهُ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ط فَمَنْ
نَوَلِي بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَوَلَّكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ (آل عمران)

i.e., "After the book and the wisdom which I have given you, if a prophet come to you verifying that which is with you, ye shall surely believe in him and help him. God asked them if they agreed and solemnly promised. They replied that they agreed. Thereupon, God added: Bear witness, and I am a witness with you. Whoever turns back after that will be a rebel" (III, 82, 83). This verse reminds us of the same old promise given to the previous prophets about the advent of a world-prophet. The Holy Qur-ān continues:—

أَفْغَرِ دِينَ اللَّهِ يَفْقَهُونَ وَلَهُ اسْمٌ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
طَوَّعًا وَكَرْهًا وَاللَّهُ يَرْجِعُهُمْ ط فَلْأَمَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ
عَلَيْهَا وَمَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
وَالْإِسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَى وَعِيسَى وَالْبَنُونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
لَا نَفَرَقَ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَكُنْ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ (آل عمران)

"What! is it other than God's religion that they crave? When to Him is resigned whosoever is

in the heavens and the earth, will he or nill he, and to Him shall they return! Say, we believe in Allāh and what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and what was given to Moses, and Jesus, and the prophets from their Lord.—We will make no distinction (by accepting the prophets of one nation and rejecting those of others) between any of them, and we are unto Him resigned" (III, 84, 85). In these verses, by making the Muslims attest the truth of the revelations of all the previous prophets, it is clearly pointed out that the Muslims and their Prophet are the fulfillers of that promise. This is amply corroborated by a number of other verses of the Holy Qur-ān, as in Chapter XXXV, after stating that there has passed no nation in which a prophet has not been sent (v. 25), the Holy Qur-ān says:—

وَالَّذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ط إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِعِبَادِهِ لَخَبِيرٌ بَصِيرٌ (فاطر)

i.e., "What We have revealed to thee is true and attests what exists in your time (*i.e.*, the revelations of the previous prophets who appeared in different nations of the world). Verily Allah is All-knowing and All-seeing" (XXXV, 32). Similarly, we learn from the traditions that the Holy Prophet bore witness to the truth of the prophets of Persia and India. So, it is to bring this prophecy to the front that the Holy Qur-ān repeatedly verifies the previous revelations. Moreover, as the above quotations prove, this verification was not confined to the revelations of the Israelite prophets only, but extended over the revelations of all the prophets of the world. Now, it is admitted on all hands that the revelations of all the prophets are not intact but that the revelations of some of them are not found to exist at all, whereas those of others exist in such a dubious form that it is difficult to affirm how much of them is true. In these circumstances, the verification of the Holy Qur-ān does not mean that the existing scriptures have been declared to be the true word of God, but it signifies that prophets were raised in different parts of the world and that they were the recipients of the word of God. It further signifies that the different faiths of the world that had been for thousands of years suppressing evil in their respective spheres of influence were not the innovations of men but had their origin in God. Thus, it is abundantly clear that, in the verse under discussion, the clause "مصدقًا لِمَا مَعَكُمْ" "Verifying that which is with you" cannot mean that, according to the Holy Qur-ān, the Bible was entirely true and intact, for the Holy Qur-ān has not limited its verification to the revelations of Israelites but has extended it to the revelations of all the previous prophets. The Israelite scriptures must have been attested in the same manner as those of other prophets.

It should also be noted that the Holy Qur-ān has repeated this attestation several times, but nowhere is it mentioned that it attests the Gospels and Pentateuch now extant. But at some places, God addresses the Israelites, saying, "The Holy Qur-ān attests what is with you." At other places, speaking of them, God says: "The Holy Qur-ān attests what is with them." It is now easy to see that the Holy Qur-ān does not testify to the truth of every

EXPLANATORY NOTES—concluded.

writing in the possession of the Jews and the Christians. So, the object of attestation will have to be defined. As it is not possible for human reason to do it, so we must turn to the Holy Qur-ān itself for it. We learn from the Holy Qur-ān that, besides the revelation of the Holy Prophet, the Muslims are required to believe in ما نزل من قبلك "What was sent before thee." So, it is clear that the Holy Qur-ān testifies to the truth of whatever *revelation* was in the hands of the people of the Book. The next question which naturally arises is, which part of the Bible is the divine word? But we are not bound to answer this question; it is for the critics of the Bible to do so. It is enough for our purpose to believe that a part of these books is the revealed word of God, but as we are not required to act upon it, so we need not ascertain it.

The word مصدق has led some Christian writers to the erroneous conclusion that it is incumbent on Muslims to believe in the existing Christian scriptures, because they are confirmed by the Holy Qur-ān. But if they had read the verse in conjunction with other passages of the, Holy Qur-ān, they would not have held this view.

In the Holy Qur-ān we find clear refutations of certain matters contained in, or ascribed to, the Bible. As for instance, the Holy Qur-ān makes mention of a Gospel revealed to Jesus himself, but the Bible presents to us only the Gospels of Matthew, John and others, but not the one revealed to Jesus himself. The Gospel of Christ did not exist even in the time of the Holy Prophet. The Holy Qur-ān does not, therefore, confirm the Gospel which exists now or existed at the time of the Holy Prophet; but the Gospel mentioned in the Holy Qur-ān is one revealed to Jesus, which became subject to the ravages of time. Again both the old and the new Testaments contain various matters which the Holy Qur-ān, instead of confirming, has emphatically controverted. To give a few instances out of many: that the blind and the leprous are impure; that Solomon was an idolater; that David became a prey to temptations; that Aaron joined in the worship of the calf out of fear of his people, or rather himself took the lead, having observed the inclinations of his people in that direction; that Jesus is the Son of God; that one person can bear the sins of others; that the law is a curse; that God feels tired or repentant; that He chose Israelites for His special favours; and so on. In fact, there is quite a large number of beliefs and teachings in the Bible which the Holy Qur-ān rebuts by giving powerful arguments against them and declares forcibly as being not revelations from God, but interpolations of man. In the face of such a forcible condemnation of a large number of Biblical doctrines, it is preposterous to think that the Holy Qur-ān confirms the Bible, as it is before us to-day.

There is another interesting point worth noting in connection with the word مصدق (verifying) as used in the Holy Qur-ān. On careful study, we find that wherever in the Holy Qur-ān the word تصديق (tasdiq) is used in the sense of "holding true," it is always followed by the preposition بـ *bā*. This is in accordance with the Arabic dictionaries which show that when the word *tasdiq* means "holding true," its object is either preceded by *bā*, or the preposition is omitted. It is worthy of notice that whenever the Holy Qur-ān has used the word *tasdiq* in connection with the previous books, it is not followed by *bā* but لام (*lām*). The word is used in the Holy Qur-ān about the previous books as many as twelve times. Out of these, in ten instances it has the preposition لام (*lām*) after it, and only twice the word is used without any preposition. As a rule, prepositions may sometimes be omitted, and the omitted preposition in the last two cases can only be لام (*lām*), for, in no other instance, do we find the preposition بـ (*bā*) used in connection with the previous books. In all these instances, therefore, the verification of the previous books by the Holy Qur-ān does not imply that the latter holds them as true. It rather means that the Holy Qur-ān fulfils the prophecies mentioned in these books, and thus manifests the divine origin of those scriptures. This is the only possible meaning which can be put upon the word تصديق (*tasdiq*.)

To sum up, the Holy Qur-ān does not undertake to confirm the validity of the teachings embodied in the old scriptures as they are before us to-day, but it alludes to the fact that all the scriptures of old contain prophecies regarding the advent of a Prophet; and by bringing these prophecies to fulfilment in the person of the Holy Founder of Islam, the Holy Qur-ān has confirmed the divine origin of those scriptures. And we do actually find clear and unmistakable prophecies about our Holy Prophet in the books of the Jews and the Christians, the Zoroastrians, and the Hindus, which all find their fulfilment in the person of our Holy Prophet (see Introduction).

2. Elsewhere, God says : متاع الدنيا قليل i.e., "The resources of the world are but insignificant." Thus, the verse means, "Do not forsake religion for paltry material."

3. Here the Jews are first forbidden to mingle truth with untruth, by quoting verses from their scriptures (truth) and putting wrong interpretations on them (untruth). Next, they are forbidden to suppress the truth, viz., the prophecies in their scriptures which refer to the promised Prophet.

وَأَقِمْو الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ⁴⁴ أَتَأْمُرُونَ
النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا
تَعْقِلُونَ⁴⁵ وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى

44. *Wa aqī-muṣṣalāta wa ātuṣ-zakāla war-ka'ū ma'ar-rāki'in.*

45. *A-ta'murū-nannāsa bil-birri wa tansauna anfusa-kum wa antum tattilūn al-kitāb; a-fa-lā ta'qilūn.* 46. *Was-ta'inū biṣ-ṣabri waṣ-ṣalāh; wa inna-hū la-kabīratun illā 'alal-*

44. And ^a observe prayer, and ^b give the **zakāt*, ¹ and bow down with those ^{*} *i.e., legal alms.* who bow.²

45. ^c Do ye enjoin others to do what is good and forget your ownselves, ³ while ye read the Book? ⁴ Do ye not then understand?

1. As these two commandments form the essence of Islamic teachings pertaining to practice, therefore, an exhortation to observe prayer and pay the *Zakāt* (legal alms) amounts to an invitation to accept Islam.

2. Devote yourselves solely to the worship of God. رَكَع (*Ruku'*) literally means "bowing down" and then, it means worship of God solely and entirely, without associating any thing or being with Him. In the *Haqīqatul-asās* it is written:—

كَانَتِ الْعَرَبُ تَسْمِي مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَمْ يَعْبُدِ الْوُثَانَ رَاكِعًا -

i.e., the Arabs used the word رَاكِع for one who worshipped God alone to the utter exclusion of idols. Similarly, we have the Arabic phrase رَكَعَ إِلَى اللَّهِ which means, "Breaking away from all the rest, he turned to God." A well-known pre-Islamic poet Nābigah says:—

سَيَبْلُغُ عَذْرًا أَوْ لِحَاها مِنْ أَمْرِ - أَلِي رَبِّهِ رَبُّ الْبَرِيَّةِ رَاكِعٌ

i.e., "He who severs his connections from all earthly things and turns to God who is the Creator

of the whole world (i.e., not an idol) will have a good excuse or will obtain salvation.

Hence, in the verse under discussion, ارْكَعُوا cannot mean 'bow down as in daily devotions,' as it will be a mere repetition of the injunction for prayers which goes before, but it means: "Spurning the fear of the world, join the true votaries of Islam in the sole worship of the one true God."

3. That is, you exhort others to virtue, but you, for your own part, willfully set aside the commandments of God for the sake of worldly ends.

4. This verse does not show that the Holy Qur-ān testifies to the truth of the present day Bible. It rather purports to be a reproach to the Jews who preached to others to follow virtue as enjoined on them by their scriptures, but never cared to practise what they preached. There is absolutely no reference here to the purity of the text of the scriptures, nor is it intended to convey that the Biblical law is operative even after the revelation of the Holy Qur-ān.

In verses 43 and 44 the Israelites are warned against hiding, through waywardness, the truths contained in their scriptures proving the truth of the new prophet.

Verses 45, 46, 47 contain a word of advice for the Israelites. They are warned against hesitating to accept a truth for fear of men, after they have understood it. This does not become them because, being the last heirs to the favours of God, they possess the truth to some extent and call people to virtue. They are exhorted to implore Divine

الْخٰشِعِيْنَ ۝ الَّذِيْنَ يٰظُنُّوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ مُّلتَقُوْا رَبَّهُمْ وَاَنَّهُمْ اِلَيْهِ
 رٰجِعُوْنَ ۝ يٰبَنِيْ اِسْرَآءِيْل اذْكُرْ وَاِنْعِمْتِي الَّتِيْ اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ
 وَاِنِّيْ فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلٰى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝ وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِيْ نَفْسٌ عَنْ

Ch. 5.
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Khūshi'īn.

47. *Alladhīna yazūnnūna anna-hum mulāqū rabbi-him, wa anna-hum ilai-hi rāji'ūn.*

R. 6.

48. *Yā Banī Isrā'ī-ladhkurū nī'matī-yallatī an'amtu 'alaikum, wa qunni faddaltu-kum 'alal 'ālamīn.* 49. *Wattaqū yaumal-lā tajzi nafsun 'an*

Lit. great.

46. And ^a seek aid with patience and prayer ; and this indeed is a hard* thing, save for the humble,

47. Who are sure ^b that they will meet their Lord, and that to Him will they return.

R. 6.

48. O ye children of Israel ! Remember ^c My blessing which I blessed you with, and that I ^d exalted you above all †peoples.¹

Lit.
Worlds.

1. This does not mean that the Israelites are declared to be superior to all other peoples who have ever dwelt on this planet. Such a meaning is inconsistent with other passages of Holy Qur-ān. Take, for instance, the verse :—

ان الله اصطفى آدم ونوحا و آل ابراهيم و آل عمران
 علي العالمين ٥ (آل عمران)

“God conferred on Adam, Noah, the children of Abraham and the children of Imran pre-eminence over all the worlds” (III, 34). Here also the above named prophets are declared to be excelling all the world, although there can be only one man and one people who can claim superiority over all other men and peoples in the true sense of the term. Evidently, *alamīn* here signifies the people of that age.

succour by patience and prayer if overpowered by fear of men, and again if praying and turning to God seems burdensome to them they are invited to reflect over the fact that after a short lease of life in this transitory world they will have to render an account of their deeds to God. These things are not at all irksome to those who have a firm faith in their final retreat to God.

Verse 48 reminds the Israelites of the blessings which God had already showered upon them ; and dissuades them from offering opposition to His dispensation. Verse 49 threatens them with sure and inevitable punishment from

٤٩
 نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ
 وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يَدَبُّ حُونَ
 أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكَ بَلَاءٌ لَكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ٥٠

afsin shai'a-ŋ-wa lā yuqbalu minhā shaf'ā'atun-wa lā yu'khadhu minhā 'adlun wa lā hum yunṣarūn.

50. *Wa idh najjainā-kum-min āli Fir'auna yasūmūna-kum sū'al-'adhūbi yudhabbiḥūna abnā-akum wa yastahyūna nisā'a-kum, wa fī dhālikum balā'um-mir-Rabbi-kum 'azīm.*

49. And fear the day when a soul*^a shall not make satisfaction for a soul* at all,[†] nor shall^b intercession be accepted for it,[‡] nor shall ransom be taken from it,[‡] nor shall[†] they be helped.¹

* i.e., a person.
 † lit., even a bit.
 ‡ Lit. her.

50. And (remember) when We 'delivered you from Pharaoh's people who afflicted you with grievous torment,'² 'killing your sons and sparing your women,'³ and 'n that there was a great trial for you from your Lord.

1. This is only another way of saying that no body shall be permitted to offer himself to bear punishment for others, nor shall any body be allowed to claim deliverance on the strength of any redemption, nor again shall the sinners be given the chance to pay a price for their sins. The problem of intercession, as referred to in this verse, deserves more than a passing notice. There is no denying the fact that Islam recognises the lawfulness of intercession and holds up the Holy Prophet of Arabia as the intercessor with God for the sinful. And as the verse under discussion states that intercession shall be of no avail, the Christian critics are exultant over the discovery of an inconsistency! They fail to see that there is no inherent contradiction, but that the different verses are really reconcilable. If the Holy Qur-ān herein rejects intercession, it points out elsewhere, with all clearness, that, on the day of Judgment, intercession *will* take place, though not without the permission of God. If our Christian critics had pieced together these verses, they would

have understood the true character of intercession as allowed in Islam. It depends upon the express permission of God, which means that no sinner will have a right to salvation through an intercessor, nor will anybody have a right to stand as an intercessor for another. When intercession is made to depend upon the permission of God, it does not certainly ensure one's salvation, because how could one know whether or not God would grant such permission? In fact, by thus qualifying intercession and making it depend on the Divine will, God has, on the one hand, exploded the wrong notion, which is entertained by many, that a man is free to act as he pleases, for his sins are sure to be forgiven on his forefathers' or prophets' interceding in his behalf; and has, on the other hand, opened a way to salvation for those whose sins will to a degree outweigh their virtues, but whose good intention and earnest endeavours in the path of God will render them fit objects of intercession. According to the Holy Qur-ān and the traditions, this privilege

God both here and hereafter in case they persist in refusing to profit by the favours God has so far shown to them. Further on details are given of the favours which God had shown to the Israelites, as also of the evils which the Israelites had done in spite of those favours. Thus, the grim reality is clearly impressed upon the Israelites that, in fulfilment of the promise given to the sons of Isaac through Abraham, God has always shown mercy to them, poured all manner of blessings upon them, and raised prophets among them, but they themselves have now forfeited those favours on account of their wanton and continued disregard of His commandments. In connection with these favours the first thing mentioned is what welded the Israelites into one nation. This was the tyranny over them of the Egyptian Pharaohs, their rally as a nation for the first time in their history round Moses, and finally their deliverance from the cruelty of Pharaoh through Moses (v. 50). Then follows the favour of God which manifested itself, on the one hand, in the

وَإِذْ قَرَّبْنَا بَكْمُ الْبَحْرِ فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ
تَنْظُرُونَ⁵¹ وَإِذْ وَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ

51. *Wa idh faragnū bi-kumul-bahra fa-anjainā-kum wa aghraqnā āla Fir'auna wa antum tanzurūn.* 52. *Wa idh wā'adnū Mūsā arba'ina lailatan thum-mattakhadhtumul-'ijla*

51. And (remember) when "We divided for you the sea and saved you and drowned Pharaoh's people, while ye looked on." ¹

of intercession will, on the Day of Judgment, be granted specially to the Holy Prophet. The truth is that intercession there must be, but with the express permission of God. Only he who will be permitted to do so will intercede, and only those in whose behalf permission for intercession is granted will be interceded for and forgiven.

2. We read in Exodus I, 8-14: "Now there arose up a new King over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of children of Israel are more and mightier than we: come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore, they did set over them task-masters to afflict them with their burdens.And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour."

3. Moses was born in the days of Rameses II, who was a bitter enemy of the Israelites. Envious of their progress, he ordered their sons to be killed, but could not succeed very much in his designs, owing to the kind-heartedness of the nurses. At last, he ordered the sons of the Israelites to be thrown into the river, and the daughters spared (*vide* Exodus I, 22; Acts VII, 19 and the Talmud). A misunderstanding about the word ذبح *dhabh* has led some translators to think that, against the facts of history, the Holy Qur-ān represents the sons of Israel as having been put to the sword. The misunderstanding is due to the fact that the term *dhabh* is used both in the meaning of "cutting the throat" as well as "putting to death." It is by

ignoring the latter sense that room can be found for this wrong notion. We read in the Tājul-'Arūs Vol. II, p. 141: الذبح الهلاك *i.e.*, *Adhdhabh* means "putting to death." So يذبحون أبناءكم *yudhabbiḥūna abnā'a kum* does not mean "they put your sons to the sword" but it means "they put your sons to death." Again, the Holy Qur-ān has itself explained the significance of *yudhabbiḥūna abnā'a rum* in Chapter VII, 142, by putting it as يقاتلون *yaqtulūna abnā'a rum* which means, "they killed your sons," no matter whatever the method.

1. This verse refers to that miracle which God showed for Moses when he was leading the Israelites from Egypt to Syria and Pharaoh with his hosts was pursuing them in order to take them back. This event is narrated in Exodus XIV, 21-30. Besides the verse under discussion, the Holy Qur-ān speaks of it in Chapter XXVI, 63, and again in Chapter XX, 80. Reading all these verses together, the narrative may be summed up thus: When the Israelites were on their way for the Holy Land, they were chased by the army of Pharaoh who were close behind them. Finding themselves all but captured, they were greatly dismayed; but God cheered them up through Moses, asking him to strike the water with his rod. He did this and the sea made way for them. They proceeded onward, with water on either side looking like the mounds of sand. The army of Pharaoh continued their pursuit, but the water of the sea returned after the Israelites had safely crossed it, and as a result, the Egyptians were drowned. In order to understand the true import of this incident, it should be kept in view that, according to the Holy Qur-ān, a miracle is purely the work of God and that man has no hand in it. So, the raising of the rod and striking the sea on the part of Moses was by way of a sign, having nothing whatever to do with the parting of the sea.

bringing out of the Israelites from a country where they were long subjected to torture and persecution, and on the other, in the destruction of their enemies under their very eyes (v. 51).

مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ⁵² ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَشْكُرُونَ⁵³ وَإِذْ أَنْبَأْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ⁵⁴

mim-badihi wa antum zālimūn.

53. *Thumma 'afaunā 'ankum-mim-ba'di dhālika la'allakum tashkurūn.*

54. *Wa idh ātainā Mūsā-kitāba wal-furqāna la'alla-kum tahtadūn.*

52. And (remember) when We promised Moses "forty nights;" then after him ye made ^bthe calf, and ye were transgressors.²

53. Then after that We ^c forgave³ you, that ye might be grateful.

54. And (remember) when We gave Moses the 'scripture' and the 'Discrimination'⁵ that ye might be guided.

Similarly, it should also be borne in mind that the words of the Holy Qur-ān do not lend themselves to the erroneous inference that there was an actual split in the sea to afford a passage for Moses. The two words used in the Holy Qur-ān in this connection are *فرقا* (*faragā*) and *انفلق* (*infalaqa*), the root idea of both being 'parting.' So what we can learn from the Holy Qur-ān about this story is, that when the Israelites were to cross the sea, it parted or, what is the same thing, receded from the shore, land becoming visible; and the Israelites went on their way. Such occurrences are not rare on the sea-shore, the part of the Red sea crossed by the Israelites being also subject to this phenomenon.

In Abbot's *Life of Napoleon* it is related that "one day, with quite a retinue, he (Napoleon) made an excursion to that identical point of the Red Sea which, as tradition reports, the children of Israel crossed three thousand years ago. The tide was out, and he passed over the Asiatic shore upon

extended flats. Various objects of interest engrossed his attention until late in the afternoon, when he commenced his return. The twilight faded away, and darkness came rapidly on. The party lost their path, and, as they were wandering bewildered among the sands, the rapidly returning tide surrounded them. The darkness of the night increased, and the horses floundered deeper and deeper in the rising waves. The water reached the girths of the saddles, and dashed upon the feet of the riders, and destruction seemed inevitable. From that perilous position Napoleon extricated himself by that presence of mind and promptness of decision which seemed never to fail him.....The horses did not reach the shore until midnight, when they were wading breast deep in the swelling waves. The tide rises on the part of the coast to the height of 22 feet. 'Had I perished in that manner like Pharaoh,' said Napoleon, 'it would have furnished all the preachers in Christendom with a magnificent text against me.'

After these two, the greatest event in the Israelite history refers to the time when commandments for the worship of God were for the first time sent to them and thereby a foundation was laid for their spiritual edification. This was done when Moses went to Sinai for 40 nights. The first two favours paved the way for their national cohesion and for conquest, and the third one came as a corner-stone for their social and spiritual advancement. Thus, the favours of God followed a natural sequence. At the same time, attention is invited to the awful lack of gratitude and righteousness on the part of the Israelites. When, after cementing them into a nation and destroying their foes, God was leading them to conquests and Moses was receiving divine law for their spiritual elevation on Mount Sinai, just then they had the audacity to make an idol in the shape of a calf, and, forsaking the Merciful God of the world, fell prostrate before it. Again, although the circumstances under which this grossest of evils was committed demanded their immediate and wholesale destruction, yet God, in His mercy, pardoned them as a nation, so that, failing in the past, they might profit by this fresh favour (vv. 52 and 53).

It is further pointed out that this sin of setting up equals to God was not committed through ignorance, because the Israelites had already been in receipt of Divine commandments which were enough for them to discriminate between truth and falsehood. These were the Ten Commandments which had already been received by them before Moses went to Sinai for 40 nights and which forcibly prohibited the worship of others than God (v. 54).

EXPLANATORY NOTES—continued.

What constitutes a miracle in the escape of the Israelites is that God so arranged matters that they reached the sea-shore at the time of the ebb-tide, and just when Moses uplifted the rod, water began to recede; but when the army of Pharaoh began to cross the sea, they met with unusual obstacles which greatly retarded their progress and thus, while they were yet in the midst of the sea, the tide flowed and they were drowned to a man. This view is further borne out by the Holy Qur-ān in the words: *فكان كل فرق كالطود العظيم* (شعراء), i.e., When the sea receded, every part looked like a hillock of sand (XXVI, 63). It is clear that the word *كل* (*kull*) which conveys a plural sense would not have been used, if the splitting of the sea had been the idea to be expressed. This word leaves no room for doubt that, according to the Holy Qur-ān, the sea was not divided into two parts, but it only flowed back from the shore. As is the case in such seas as have depressions full of water close to the shore, these depressions remained full of water even after the tide had flowed back, and looked like petty lakes in the midst of dry land when the sea had retreated. The map of the Red Sea shows near the shore a number of small lakes which were more numerous in old times, as the maps of those days clearly indicate. So, when the Israelites were passing, they had the sea on one side and the small lakes on the other, which conformably to the natural laws of perspective appeared raised above the level of the land.

1. In another place, the Holy Qur-ān tells us that at first the appointed duration was thirty nights, but by the subsequent addition of ten days, the period was extended to forty days. This favour was granted to Moses because of his faithfulness and sincerity. We may, therefore, infer that God does not let the sincerity of His servants go unrewarded.

2. Man is the slave of his environments. He gradually imitates and assimilates the views of the people among whom he happens to live, move, and have his being. This is specially true of a subject-people, who assiduously imitate the manners and customs of the rulers. The Israelites lived under Pharaoh for a long time, and naturally came to imbibe the faith of the Egyptians, particularly of the ruling Pharaohs. When they, the Israelites, left Egypt with Moses, on the way, wherever they came across any idol-worshipping people, they requested Moses to sanction for them worship of similar idols. So eager were they for such worship that when Moses went to Mount Sinai, they found time to make a calf for their idol, and took to worshipping it. They preferred the worship of the calf, because they saw in Egypt that the cow was held there in special veneration. Egypt was an agricultural country where the cattle must of course be of the highest good to men, and hence the worship of the cow. Likewise, in India, Persia and all other countries where people live on the product of the soil, the cow naturally becomes an object of reverence and worship.

As regards Aaron's part in the affair, the Holy Qur-ān tells us that he did by no means counten-

ance the worship of the calf. We read in the Holy Qur-ān:

ولقد قال لهم هارون من قبل يقوم إنما فتنتم به ج وان ربكم الرحمن فاتبعوني واطيعوا أمري (طه)

"And Aaron had certainly said to them, ye have been tried by means of this calf. Your God is *Rahmān* (the Beneficent); follow me and obey my orders" (XX, 91). But, on the contrary, we learn from the Old Testament that Aaron also participated in the calf-worship! It is indeed strange that such incredible stories should find place in a book that claims to be inspired. The fact is that the Bible has unfortunately been a prey to human interference. The very fact that it calumniates the chosen ones of God proves that the text of the Bible has become corrupt. No sane person will doubt that those who had been appointed by God to bring about the regeneration of the world must have themselves been men of ideal character, free from sin which would estrange them from God. It is, indeed, the height of absurdity to believe even for a moment that a prophet who holds personal communion with God can even think of ascribing divine attributes to an idol, or, through fear of men, give expression to views unworthy of God. It is probable that, in order to cover their own vices, some interested people had interpolated the sacred writings and ascribed certain vices to the prophets; and the Christian divines subsequently took them for granted, as they were of great use to them as a means for the exaltation of Jesus over the rest of the prophets.

3. We learn from Exodus, XXXII, 9, 10, that the worship of the calf called forth the wrath of God, Who said to Moses: "I have seen this people and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now, therefore, let Me alone that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them." Thereupon, Moses prayed to God for them and then, in the words of the Old Testament, "The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people" (Exodus XXXII, 14). It may be noted that the Holy Qur-ān uses the word "forgave" instead of "repented," as used in the Bible, because the latter word is not appropriate to God's majesty.

4. Rev. Dr. Wherry, in his Commentary upon the Holy Qur-ān, raises an objection in this place. He says that the Torah was not revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai, but only the Ten Commandments, and concludes that the statement of the Holy Qur-ān about the *كتاب* (*kitāb*) having been given to Moses while he was on Mount Sinai for forty nights, shows lack of true historical knowledge on the part of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him). The objection only betrays an inadequate knowledge of the Arabic language and of the Holy Qur-ān. In the *Tājul 'Arūs*, Vol. I, the meaning of the word *kitāb* is given as follows: *الكتاب ما يكتب فيه*, i.e., *kitāb* is that in which or on which there is something written; *والكتاب المصنف*, i.e., *kitāb* also means 'a book.

It also means an 'obligation' or a 'commandment,' as in the verse *كتب عليكم الصيام* (بقرة), i.e., 'Fasting is made obligatory on you' (II, 183), Again

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يُقَوْمُوا إِنَّا ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ
الْعِجْلِ فَتُوبُوا إِلَىٰ بَارِئِكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِندَ

55. *Wa idh qāla Mūsā li-qaumihi yā qaumi inna-kum zalamtum anfusa-kum bittikhādhi-kumul-'iyla, fa-tūbū ilā bārī'ī-kum faqtulū anfusa-kum ; dhalikum khairul-lakum 'inda*

the word is also applied to 'an epistle,' as the Holy Prophet said :

من نظراي كتاب اخيه بغير اذن فكأنما ينظر في النار

i.e., "Whoever looks into a letter of his brother without his permission, looks into fire, as it were." From this it is clear that the word كتاب *kitāb* can correctly denote the Decalogue given to Moses on Mount Sinai, because, within the meanings cited above, the word can be applied both to the commandments or to the tablets on which they were written. Moreover, we learn from the Holy Qur-ān (VII, 146, 151 and 155) that it was only the tablets and not the Pentateuch that were given to Moses on Mount Sinai. It may be noted that the Holy Qur-ān also has used the word *kitāb* in different senses. For instance, speaking of the short epistle of King Solomon, it says :—

قالت ياها الملأاني القى الي كتاب كريم ○ إنه من
سليمان ○ إنه بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ○ ألا تعلموا علي
وأتوني مسلمين ○ (النمل)

i.e., When the letter of Solomon reached the Queen of Sheba, she said, "O great men of the nation, I have received an honourable *kitāb* (epistle) from Solomon and it runs thus: 'I begin with the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful, and ask you to refrain from undue excess towards me, but come to me submitting'" (XXVII, 31-33). Thus, there is no reason why the tablets may not be called كتاب (*kitāb*).

5. In his Commentary, Rev. Dr. Wherry writes to say on the authority of another writer that the Syriac derivation of the word الفرقان *Al-Furqān* (the Discrimination) points to the fact that the Holy

Prophet of Islam might have taken it from the Syrians. We are indeed unable to understand how Rev. Dr. Wherry could commit himself to such a glaring absurdity. فرقان (*Furqān*) is an Arabic word derived from فرق (*Farq*) and the Arabic language abounds in words derived from the same root, which are commonly met with in pre-Islamic literature of Arabia.

The root meaning of the word *Furqān*, as we learn from the Tājul 'Arūs (Vol. VII, pp. 43 and 45) is 'to differentiate,' 'to separate,' 'to sift.' And hence *Furqān* is applied to that which differentiates between truth and falsehood, between reasoning and fallacy. *Furqān* also means "argument" because it serves to discriminate between the true and the false. "Morning" is also termed *Furqān*, because it separates night from day. It also means 'aid' or 'support,' because the man helped and supported is distinguished from those against whom he receives assistance. Thus, this verse means that God helped Moses against his adversaries, or taught him reasons and arguments, or brought about such events as led to discrimination between truth and falsehood: for instance, the episode of calf-worship, which brought to light truth as distinct from falsehood and separated the true from the untrue. According to the Holy Qur-ān, *Furqān* is not the name of any particular object; but every sign and every sort of divine assistance, every agent discriminating truth from untruth, and every argument or reason, which serves the same purpose, is called *Furqān* in the language of the Holy Qur-ān. The day on which the battle of Badr was fought is called *Yaumul Furqān*, "the day of discrimination," because on that day God caused truth to be distinguished from untruth, and assisted the Muslims against their opponents.

بَارِكُمْ ۖ قَاتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ۝ وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يٰمُوسَىٰ
لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ نَرَىٰ اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ الصَّيْقَةُ ۖ وَأَنْتُمْ
تَنْظُرُونَ ۝ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ۝

Bārī-i-kum, fa-tāba 'alaikum, inna hū huwat-Tawwābur-Rahīm.

56 *Wa idh qultum yā-Mūsā lan-nu'mīna la-ka ḥattā naral-bīha jahratan fa-akhadhat-kumuṣ ṣā'iqatu wa antum tanzurūn.*

57. *Thumma ba'athnā-kum min-ba'di mauti-kum la'allakum tashkurūn.* 58. *Wa*

55. And (remember) when Moses said to his people: 'O my people! verily, "ye have wronged yourselves by making the calf; turn ye, therefore, to your Creator, and slay your brethren"; that is best for you with your Creator.' So He accepted their repentance; verily He is the Relenting, the Merciful.

56. And (remember) when ye said: ^b 'O Moses, we will by no means believe thee until we see Allāh manifestly.' ^a Then the thunderbolt overtook you, while ye gazed ^c

57. Then ^c We raised you up after your death, ^a that ye might be grateful.

1. It appears from this verse that a general pardon was granted to the Israelites; but it was essential to punish the ringleaders. They were therefore, ordered by Moses to be killed. *فاقتلوا انفسكم* does not mean *kill your own selves* but it means, *slay some of your kith and kin*. The latter meaning is borne out by verse 85, where God says:—

ولا تخرجون انفسكم من دياركم

i.e., "And ye shall not turn *yourselves*, *i.e.*, your kinsmen, out of your homes." Similarly, in Chapter IX, 37: *فلا تظلموا انفسكم (توبة)* "Do not be cruel to yourselves (*i.e.*, your own people) in these months."

Speaking of this incident, the Bible says: "Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour" (Ex. XXXII, 27). The Holy Qur-ān does not state the number of the slain, but in Exodus the number is specified as 3,000. This seems to be an exaggeration, because the Israelites could have scarcely numbered more than a few thousands altogether.

2. That is, (1) when the ringleaders had been chastised, God pardoned the rest, and (2) for the slain death was held to be a sufficient penalty,

Thereafter, attention is called to the fact that although general pardon was granted, the ringleaders were punished to serve as a warning to others (v. 55). But this also failed to do them any good. They drifted along from bad to worse, and once even went so far as to say to Moses that they would not believe in God until they had seen Him manifestly. Thereupon they were punished (v. 56). But even this chastisement was not everlasting. God again took pity on them and breathed new life in them, so that they might become grateful (v. 57).

EXPLANATORY NOTES—concluded.

and therefore God would not punish them in the next world.

3. It is usual with obstinate people that when they fail to meet reasons and arguments, they go on shifting their ground and bring forward new demands with no other object than to evade the truth. Even in these days there are men who, when brought to face the question of the existence of God, on the ground of reason and argument, put forward a demand to see God with their eyes. From among the Israelites, some people appear to have made a similar demand. The Bible makes no mention of it; but this is a question which is commonly raised by the opposers of truth. The Holy Qur-ān has proceeded from God and is not therefore precluded from referring to events not mentioned in the Bible.

4. In the Holy Qur-ān "*Ṣā'iqah*" (صاعقة) means 'punishment.' We read in the *Lisān-ul-'Arab* (Vol. XII: قبل الصاعقة العذاب i.e., Lexicographers give *Ṣā'iqah* the meaning of 'punishment.' Careful research will show that the word "*Ṣā'iqah*" is used to express such a visitation as is attended with a dreadful sound, e.g., earthquake, lightning, or storm. And because terrible visitations like these result in death or swoon, the word is secondarily applied to 'swoon' or 'death,' or to any punishment the infliction of which causes swoon or death. In the Holy Qur-ān the word has been used in the general sense of punishment. Take, for instance, the verse: فان اعرضوا فقل انذرتكم صاعقة مثل صاعقة عاد وثمود

(حم السجدة) "If these people turn away, then say to them, I warn you against a punishment which is similar to the punishment of 'Ad and *Thamud*' (XLI, 14). Further on, God describes the punishment of 'Ad, adding that they were chastised with a violent storm, and again speaks of that of *Thamud* in Chapter *A'rūf* (VII, 79) in the words:

فاخذتهم الرجفة i.e., the tribe of *Thamud* perished in an earthquake. It is clear, therefore, that in the Holy Qur-ān the word "*Ṣā'iqah*" has the general sense of punishment, whether it takes the form of a storm or of an earthquake: it need not be followed by death. The word conveys the same general sense of punishment in the verse under discussion. The Israelites were punished for their impudent demand, because they wished to dictate terms to God, saying that they would not accept the message of God, if He did not fulfil the condition they had imposed. If they had, reverently and out of love, desired to see God, even as Moses had done,

saying: رب انظر اليك (اعراف) "O God! Manifest to me Thy personality, so that I may see Thee" (VII, 144), they would not have been punished. But their demand was the outcome of wickedness, and hence the punishment.

5. This clause shows that the punishment was not death, but was confined to distress and disgrace.

6. In conjunction with the previous verse, these words mean, "We rendered you respectable and honourable, after you had been subjected to disgrace and distress." In the previous verse the words "while ye gazed" show that they were not dead. The words موت (maut) and حيوات (hayāt) being antonyms, the nature of one must correspond with that of the other. The *Mufridāt-i-Rāghib* gives six different meanings of موت (maut):—(a) The extinction of the power of growth, as we have in the Holy Qur-ān: !علموا ان الله يحيي الارض بعد موتها (حديد) "Know that Allāh gives life to earth after its death" (LVII, 18).

(b) 'The loss of the feeling power,' as the Holy Qur-ān says: يا ليتني مت قبل هذا (مريم) "I (Mary) wish I had lost my feeling before this pain, so that I might have escaped the trouble" (XIX, 24).

(c) 'The loss of the power of reasoning (also called *jahūlat*, i.e., ignorance),' as we read in the Holy Qur-ān او من كان ميتا فاحيينه و جعلنا له نورا يمشي به في الناس كمن مثله في الظلمات ليس بخارج منها (اعام) i.e., 'Shall he, who was ignorant (lit. dead), and whom We have given knowledge, and for whom We have ordained a light whereby he may walk among men, be like him who is in the darkness, whence he cannot come forth?' (VI, 123).

(d) 'A grief which embitters the life of man,' e.g., ياتيه الموت من كل مكان وما هو بميت (ابراهيم) i.e., "Death faces him on all sides, but he is not dead" (XIV, 18).

(e) 'Sleep,' as the Arabs call it a light sort of death.

(f) 'The separation of the human soul from the human body.'

Out of these six meanings, only the third and the fourth can be made applicable here. The verse can not be understood to mean that they were restored to life after they had actually died, because the Holy Qur-ān clearly repudiates the idea of the dead coming to life again.

ظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّاءَ وَالسَّلْوَى كُلُّوا مِنْ

طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ 58

ṣallalnā 'alai-kumul ḡhamāma wa anzalnā 'alai-kumul-manna was-salwā; kulū min ṭaiyibāti mā razaqnā-kum; wa mā ṣalamūnā wa lākin kānu anfusa-hum yaẓlimūn. 59. Wa

58. And "We caused the clouds to shadow" you and sent down upon you Manna and Salwā,² 'Eat ye of the good things of what We have provided you with'. And they wronged Us not, but it was themselves that they wronged.³

1. We learn from Exodus IX, 17; X, 34, that clouds spread and shadowed over the spot where the Israelites encamped and that they dispersed on the day when it was time for them to resume their journey. But the words and the context in the Holy Qur-ān show that the shadowing of the clouds means 'rainfall,' because clouds that give rain are generally very dark and dense. Along with 'the clouds,' the Holy Qur-ān mentions two eatables: *Manna* and *Salwā*. This leads to the conclusion that in that wild waste there was scarcity of both water and food and that God used to quench their thirst by sending dense clouds, and along with it He used to satisfy their hunger by providing *Manna* and *Salwā*. God shows special favours to His servants in order to remove their difficulties and promote their comfort. Such was His habit not only in the past, but even now He pours His blessings upon His chosen ones.

2. In the Arabic language مَنْ 'Mann' means لَرَنْجِيْن (honey-dew) which is found frozen on trees and stones at night, and tastes sweet. It also means 'gift' and 'bounty,' and thus anything which can be obtained without any trouble or difficulty falls under the category of *Manna* (*Aqrab-ul-Mawārid*, Vol. II, p. 1245).

Salwā means 'quail' or anything that gives comfort. (*Aqrab-ul-Mawārid*, Vol. I, p. 538). When the Israelites were put to trouble in the desert and could get nothing to eat, God provided them

with things on which they could live. Quails abounded in the place and لَرَنْجِيْن (honey-dew) and other easily obtainable things were also produced there. The Holy Prophet says:—

الكَمَاةُ مِنَ الْمَنِّ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيَّ مُوسَى

i.e., "Mushroom is among the things with which God furnished Moses." This shows that not only honey-dew but mushrooms and other similar things were also provided, which the Israelites could eat. This event is related in Exodus XVI.

3. There are many men who look upon the injunctions of God as a burden and, therefore, do not hesitate to break them. God does not stand in need of any sort of worship, and anybody's obedience or submission does not add anything to His glory. Even if the whole mankind become resigned to His will, His majesty will not be any the greater; and if, on the contrary, all transgress His commandments, His glory will not be any the less. All His injunctions and commandments are directed towards the edification of man. But the ignorant grumble that it is a burden forced upon them, and, as a consequence, take to breaking the commandments meant for their benefit and given to men out of mercy, thereby paving the way for their own ruin. In this verse reference is made to the breach of God's commandments and lack of gratitude for God's favours exhibited by the Israelites who, by so doing, did no harm to God, but a decided harm to their own selves. Thus, they were cruel to their own selves.

Passing on from these favours, which referred to national or spiritual advancement, God reminds the Israelites of those favours which were shown to them for the removal of even their common place inconveniences. As for instance, clouds were sent for rain in the desert where they suffered from want of food and water and they were fed with *Manna* and *Salwa*. But they persisted in their ingratitude for all that (v. 58). Even then God continued showing His grace,

إِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا وَاَدْخُلُوا

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الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيئَتَكُمْ وَسَنَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ قَوْلَهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ

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ظَلَمُوا رِجْزًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ وَإِذْ اسْتَسْقَى مُوسَى

Ch. 6.

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idh qulnad-khulū hūdhi-hil-qaryata fakulū minhā haithu shi'tum raghadan-wadkhu-lul-bāba sujjadan-wa qulū hittatun naghfir la-kum khatāyā-kum, wa sa-nazi-dul-muhsinin.

60. *Fa-baddā-lal-ladhina zalamū qaulan-ghai-ral-ladhī qīla la-hum; fa-anzalnū 'alal-ladhina zalamū rijzam-minas-samā'i bimā kūnū yafsuqūn. R. 7. 61. Wa idhis-tasqā Musā*

59. And (remember) when We said, 'Enter ye this town and eat therefrom freely wherever ye will, and enter the gate humbly and say, 'Hittatun'' We will pardon you your errors, and We will give increase to the righteous.'

60. But the transgressors changed it for a word other than that which was said to them. So We sent down upon the transgressors a punishment from heaven, for that they were rebellious.²

1. According to the *Lane's Arabic-English Lexicon*, *حِطَّة* (*Hittatun*) is a substantive from *اسخط* *استخط*, meaning 'a request for the putting down of a heavy burden.' In Theology, to seek relief from burden is to seek forgiveness of sins. So, the word means "Forgive us our sins."

2. In these two verses, another instance is cited to show the ingratitude of the Israelites. It is related of them that they were once ordered to enter a habitation praying and asking forgiveness, and obedience to God's commandments was enjoined upon them. But instead of praying and asking pardon, they began to use words conveying a sense

of derision towards the prayer taught by God, the consequence being that the wicked persons who had done this met with punishment and a scourge from heaven fell upon them. The Bible has omitted the incident but mentions that a battle took place between the Israelites and the Amalekites in Rephidim (Ex. XVII, 13) which shows that the Amalekites inhabited this land, and as the Israelites were eager to live in inhabited places, they seem to have been ordered to go to some village. This part was inhabited (*vide* Enc. Bib., Vol. IV, Cols. 4036, 37), and the presence of a desert is not inconsistent with the existence of habitations, because wandering tribes often make here and there small habitations which serve as meeting places for their scattered clans.

and for their comfort ordered them to go to a habitation, exhorting them to lead a life of fear and piety, so that they might become happy. But they derived no benefit even from this opportunity and again relapsed into evil ways, for which they had to be chastised (vv. 59 and 60). Then another favour is mentioned. When they were hard pressed by

لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا
عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَشْرَابَهُمْ كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا مِنْ نَزْوَ
رِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْتَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ⁶¹ وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَسُوسِي لَكُنْ نَصِيرٌ

li-qaumi-hi, faqul-naḍrib bi-'aṣūkal-ḥajar; fanfajarat min-hulhnatā 'aṣkrata 'ainū; qad 'alima kullu unāsīm-mashraba-hum; kulū washrabu mir-risqillāhi wa lū tā'thau fil-arḍi mufsidin.

62. *Wa idh qultum yā-Mūsā lan-naṣbira*

No. 7.

61. And (remember) when Moses *prayed for water for his people, and We said, **Lū. men.* 'Strike the rock with thy rod;' and from it there flowed twelve springs; every *tribe knew their drinking place.' 'Eat and drink of what Allāh has provided, and commit not iniquity in the earth, causing disorders.'

Even Arab Bedouins and the African savages, with all their nomadic habits, often make such habitations.

It should not be forgotten that the absence of this story in the Bible does by no means warrant the conclusion that the whole affair is a myth, because historical research has established the fact that the story of the Israelites is very imperfectly related in the Bible and that whatever inadequate description is given contains not a few discrepancies. It has been discovered that often a journey stated in the Bible to be only a day's travel was actually many days' journey. All this goes to prove that the Bible has suffered much from human interference. (*Vide* Enc. Bib., Vol. II, Cols. 1436, 1437, 1443).

1. When the Israelites migrated from Egypt, they suffered much from thirst and asked for water. Moses prayed for water to God, who ordered him to strike a certain rock or stone with his rod. Moses acted as commanded by God, whereupon twelve springs gushed forth and each of the twelve tribes chose its drinking place. The Israelites' demand for water and their being supplied with it is mentioned at two places in the Bible. At one place, mention is made of the twelve springs of Elim, but nothing is said there of Moses' striking the stone with his rod and springs gushing forth. On the other hand, it is stated that 12 springs were already flowing there (Ex. XV, 27). At the second place, the locality is named where the Israelites became thirsty, and finding no water complained to Moses, who prayed to God and was ordered to strike the

rock Horeb with his rod. This Moses did, and a spring flowed out where the Israelites and the animals slaked their thirst (Ex. XVII, 1-7; and Num., XX). Here no mention is made of the twelve springs. It remains for us to decide to which of the two incidents the Holy Qur-ān refers. One is inclined to say that the Holy Qur-ān refers to the occurrence relating to the rock of Horeb, because, with the slight difference in the number of springs, almost all the details narrated in the Bible concur with the narrative of the Holy Qur-ān. The difference in the number is insignificant and both the accounts are, in the main, identical. It is an open secret to the students of the Bible that its authority as a chronicle of events is very questionable, inasmuch as some of its parts contradict others. So, when in the domain of history the testimony of the Bible merits little credence, its evidence unsupported by other authenticated credentials cannot be accepted against the Holy Qur-ān. Furthermore the dictates of common sense also support the Holy Qur-ān. At the least computation, the Israelites numbered several thousand souls, besides the riding animals and beasts of burden, which must have considerably swelled their ranks. One spring was certainly insufficient for such a large number. Thus, the whole affair favours the narrative of the Holy Qur-ān. In the Bible, the state of the thirsty Israelites at that time is described as one of extreme desperation. They were even prepared to stone Moses to death. At the time of such straits, one spring for such a large multitude could be a source of little relief. In short, the whole

thirst and no water was procurable in the desert, God saved them by revealing to Moses the knowledge of a rock from which water flowed out when struck with the rod (v. 61).

عَلَى طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُنَا رَبَّكَ لِنُخْرِجَ لَنَا مِمَّا تُنْبِئُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْ
 بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّائِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا وَبَصِلَهَا قَالَ أَسْتَبْدِلُ لَوْنِ
 الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا حَيُّطٌ مُّصْرًا فَإِنْ لَكُمْ مَسْأَلَةٌ
 فَضَرْبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَاءُ وَيَغَضِبَ مِنَ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ

'alā ṭa'āmin-wāḥidin faḍ'u lanā rabba-ka yukhrij lanā mimmā tumbi-tul-arḍu mim baqli-hā, wa qithḥā-i-hā, wa fūmi-hā wa 'adasi-hā wa baṣali-hā; qāla a-tastabdilū-nal-ladhī huwa adnā bil-ladhī huwa khayr; ihbiṭū miṣran fa-inna lā-kum-mā sa' altum wa ḍuribat 'alaihi-mudh-dhillatu wal-maskanatu, wa bā'u-bi-ghaḍa-bim-mi-nallāh; dhālika

force of the argument throws itself on the side of the Holy Qur-ān, and declares for the flowing of twelve springs as against one of the Bible narrative.

Some Christian critics object that there is no trace of the twelve springs where Moses is said to have struck the rock with his rod. In this connection it should be remembered in the first place that it is not yet definitely known in what particular region Moses pursued his journey, and hence an attempt to connect this event with any specific locality cannot be more than a mere conjecture. Many critics hold that many of the Exodus events took place in the region beyond the Gulf of Akaba. It does not, therefore, stand to reason to localize the spot where Moses struck the rock on a mere supposition, and then to form it the basis of an attack on the Quranic account. Even taking the place now pointed out as the very spot where Moses struck the rock, we find that this objection has been refuted even by some Christians themselves. Sale says on page 7 of his Translation: "One who went into those parts in the end of the fifteenth century tells us expressly that the water issued from twelve places of the rock according to the number of tribes of Israel." But even if we admit for the sake of argument, that the place

now stated by Christian critics is the very spot where Moses struck the rock and that there is no trace of twelve springs there, even then the objection seems to be based on a total ignorance of the changes to which springs are generally subject. The event occurred thousands of years ago and it is a well known fact that several times a spring gushes forth, but soon the flow of water ceases and the spring runs dry. Sometimes out of the several springs rising at the same spot, some have their openings closed and others continue flowing as usual. Often springs once flowing become so dry that no trace of them is left, or they are choked by chance accumulations and gush forth at some subsequent time. It is a common phenomenon and cannot be denied. No wonder, then, that some of the springs have ceased to flow and the openings closed.

It must be noted with regard to this miracle that it is not against the course of nature. It is within the experience of all who study geological conditions in rocky districts that very often water flows underneath small hillocks and rocks. The miracle of Moses does not lie in doing anything against the course of nature; but it lies in the fact that God pointed out to him the specific spot where water was just ready to flow at a single blow of his rod.

بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ

Ch. 7.

ع

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ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ⁶² إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَ

bi-anna-hum kânū yakfurūna bi-āyāt-il-lāhi wa yaqtulū-nan-nabiyyīna biḡhairil-ḥaqq; dhālika bimā 'aṣawwa kânū ya'tadūn. R. 8. 63. In-nal-ladhīna āmanū wal-ladhīna hādū wan-

¹ or garlic.

62. And (remember) when ye said, 'O Moses, we cannot be contented with one kind of food; pray, then, thy Lord that He would bring forth for us of what the earth grows, such as its herbs and its cucumbers and its *wheat and its lentils and its onions.' He said 'Do ye desire to take that which is worse in exchange for that which is better? Enter ye some town, and there is for you what ye ask.' And smitten were they with abasement and destitution, and they incurred the wrath of Allāh: that was because they disbelieved the signs of Allāh and ^a attempted to kill the prophets unjustly; this because they rebelled and transgressed.¹

1. It is seen that, when in trouble and distress, some people cry to God for help and confine their prayers to petty favours, but when God showers His blessings and the time of trouble is over, they begin to grumble and ask for more. The Israelites also seem to have fallen victims to this disease of ingratitude. When they were in the desert, they were on the verge of starvation and prayed to God for something to eat. But some time after this prayer of theirs had been heard, they began to exhibit discontent with one kind of food (because, as we learn from the Bible, the supply of quails was discontinued after a while and the Israelites were living on *Manna* alone) and to clamour for all kinds of greens and grains. As, however, the demand was not based on a right understanding of God's wise ways, and as they had also lost faith in the promises of God, they met with disgrace and drew upon themselves the wrath of God.

This verse should not be taken to mean that one who has a good thing to eat is forbidden to ask for another. When God has made man depend upon certain things for his existence, it is only natural to feel a desire for them, and there is no reason why God should be angry at their demanding them. God's displeasure with the Israelites was

not due to their demand for inferior things like greens and vegetables instead of better things like the Manna and the meat they already possessed. But the real cause for God's anger lay elsewhere. They had lived for a long time in bondage under Egyptians and had, of course, become lazy and timid. God wished them to remain in a desert, living on game and wild herbs, and so, by an independent mode of life, to fling off their cowardice and laziness. Thus re-vitalized and energised, they might be led to the Promised Land and made rulers of Palestine. They failed to understand the purpose of God in this isolated and independent mode of life, and insisted upon an agricultural life or a life in a habitation where they might be able to eat things grown by man. Thereupon, God pointed out their error, saying that they had asked for a life of agriculture or town life in preference to sovereignty. God wanted to make them rulers, but they wished for husbandry. So God ordered them to go to a town where they would get the desired object. For this offence of theirs, they deserved punishment, because their request was the outcome of a mistrust in the promise of God. If they had had faith in the promise of God, they would not have shown undue hurry. And their lack of faith in the words of God was due to their want of respect for the

But no attempt was made to turn these favours to good account. They took to grumbling, saying, that they could not do with one kind of food, quite forgetting that even that one kind of food was the special gift of God to them. Again, their sojourn in the desert was only for their own good. It was intended to fit them for governance. But they were not thankful for the favours of God (v. 62).

EXPLANATORY NOTES—continued.

ophets. And they opposed the prophets because they were evil-doers and sinners. The prophets invited them to guidance and virtue which they disliked, and, as a result, they opposed them. Those who are interested in the law of causation can well appreciate the admirable way in which the Holy Qur-ān traces the causal sequence of every evil to its origin and thus strikes at the root of it so as to prevent all possibilities of recurrence.

The words **يَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ** (*yaqtulū-nan-nabiyyīna*) in this verse do not mean that the Israelites 'killed the prophets,' because, up to the days of Moses, no prophet is known to have been slain by them. As a matter of fact, Moses is the first prophet who was sent to the Israelites as a nation. So, only Moses and his coadjutor, Aaron, are the only persons to whom the words *yaqtulū-nan-nabiyyīna* can be applied, but these two prophets were not killed by the Israelites, although they were often opposing him and were sometimes even bent upon killing him. Hence, these words cannot signify that they put the prophets to death, and the only possible interpretation is that they opposed the prophets and were even prepared to kill them. Arabic dictionaries show that the word **قَتَلَ** (*qatl*) is used in the Arabic language in various senses, in addition to the one of 'killing'; as for instance, the phrase **قَتَلَهُ اللَّهُ** means **لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ** "May God drive him away from His mercy-seat." Again, **اقْتُلُوا فَلَانًا** not only means "kill such a person," but also 'abandon him, and have nothing to do with him, considering him as if he were dead.' Similarly, **قَتَلَ فَلَانٌ** not only means "Such a man killed him," but also "Such a man beat him," because the verb **قَتَلَ** (*qatala*) is also formed from the root **قَتَلَ** (*qātāl*) which means 'body' and hence **قَتَلَهُ** (*qatalahu*) also means 'he hurt his body,' or 'he beat him.' Then again, **فَلَانٌ قَاتِلُ الشُّرَاتِ** literally means "Such a man is the killer of winter," which signifies that he 'neutralised the blighting influence of the chills and famine which winter brings in its wake, by giving food to the hungry and clothes to the poor.' Furthermore, **قَتَلَهُ الْعَشَقُ**, literally, "Love killed him", signifies that 'love reduced him to a condition in which he was almost dead.' In short, the word **قَتَلَ** (*qatl*), besides the primary sense, bears a variety of secondary significances. As, in the verse under discussion, it is impossible to take the word in its usual sense, a resort is imperatively necessary to a secondary meaning. Hence, the correct interpretation of the verse is that they severed their connections with the prophets of God (Moses and Aaron) or, that they beat them or tried to undo what the latter were doing. This interpretation is not only

based on the Arabic dictionaries, but the Holy Qur-ān also supports it in a number of verses. As for instance, speaking of the opponents of the Holy Prophet, the Holy Qur-ān says:—

ان الذين يكفرون بايات الله و يقتلون النبيين بغير حق
و يقتلون الذين يأمرون بالقسط من الناس فبشرهم
بعذاب الميم (آل عمران) -

i.e., "Those that repudiate the signs of God and attempt or intend to kill the prophets unlawfully, and attempt or intend to kill those who enforce justice,—to them give the tidings of a grievous punishment" (III, 21). There can be no doubt as to the meaning of the word **قَتَلَ** (*qatl*) as used in this verse. Everybody knows that the opponents of the Holy Prophet did not kill him, nor could they do so. Hence, the word **قَتَلَ** (*qatl*), used here to express the malign nature of hostile activities against the Holy Prophet, cannot bear any other meaning than that they 'attempted to kill' the Holy Prophet. (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) The plural word **رُسُل** (*Rusul*) need not create any misunderstanding as to its true application. It should not be construed to refer to the previous prophets. It has been applied to the Holy Prophet, with a view to show that an attempt to kill him amounts to an attempt to kill all the prophets. In other words, it is to signify the dignity of the Holy Prophet that the plural form *Rusul* has been used for him. For the same reason we find the plural word **رُسُل** (*Rusul*) used for Noah in Chapter XXV, 38. Besides the verse quoted above, there is another verse which proves that the word **قَتَلَ** (*qatl*) is often used to mean "intend to kill." It runs thus:—

وقال رجل مومن من آل فرعون يكتم ايمانه اتقتلون
رجلا ان يقول ربي الله وقد جاءكم بالبينات من
ربكم (مومن) -

i.e., "When Pharaoh intended to kill Moses, then a man who kept his faith hidden said: Do ye intend to kill one who says: 'My Lord is Allāh'; and has come to you with signs from your Lord" (XL, 29).

In short, what has been said above is enough to show that the word **قَتَلَ** (*qatl*) is used in the sense of 'attempting to kill,' 'intending to kill,' or mere 'beating' or 'cutting off all connections.' Any one of these meanings can be applied to this verse with equal degree of truth, and the reason for the adoption of this interpretation is that the verse speaks of the people of Moses' day, but neither they nor any of their ancestors ever killed a prophet.

النَّصْرَى وَالصَّابِّينَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا

Naṣārā waṣ-ṣābi'ina man āmana billāhi wal yau-mil-ākhirī wa 'amila ṣālihan fa-lahum ajruhum 'inda Rabbi-him, wa lā khaufun 'alaihim wa-lū hum yaḥzanūn. 64. Wa idh akhadhnā

R. 8.

63. "Verily, the Believers, and the Jews,¹ and the Christians and the Sabians,² whoso believes in Allāh and the Last Day and ³does good deeds, for them is their reward with their Lord, and ⁴no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve.³

1. الذين هادوا means "to turn Jew". So هادوا means "those who call themselves Jews."

2. صابئين *Sabi'in* is applied to the followers of two faiths: (1) star-worshipping people living in Mesopotamia (Gibbon's Rome, Vol. V, p. 460), (2) another tribe whose faith was a patchwork derived from Judaism, Christianity and Parsiism. The latter lived at the mouth of the Euphrates. As the Holy Qur-ān has not restricted the term صابئين (Sabians) to any one of the two, so it may be taken to apply to both the peoples.

3. This verse contains a grand prophecy, and points out an easy test for the recognition of the true religion. Nobody can bear the ruin and destruction of those dear to him, nor can he endure to see them in trouble and tribulation. How can then God subject His favoured servants to humiliation and disgrace. This fact furnishes us with an unerring criterion of a true religion. A divine faith is backed up by divine support and succour, whereas a false one has no share in the sustaining support of God. Resorting to this method of sifting truth from falsehood God has named certain faiths in this verse and drawn attention to the fact that, besides those who are believers in the truth of Islam and claim to be treading the right path, there are Jews, Christians and Sabians, who each in turn consider themselves as the followers of truth and claim to be doing deeds pleasing to God. In order to determine which of them are true and real believers, God points to the unfailing criterion that those people who believe in God and the Day of Judgment and do good deeds will find deliverance from fear and danger and will, by the grace of God, enjoy all sorts of comfort and tranquility of mind. This test was put forward under conditions by no means auguring well for the Muslims. This chapter

of the Holy Qur-ān was revealed towards the earlier days of the Hējira, when Islam was in a very weak state. The Arabs were its deadly foes, and a number of Medinites, who had hypocritically joined the pale of Islam, were inwardly striving to bring this holy faith to ruin. The three tribes of Jews who dwelt at Medina bore enmity against Islam and were bent upon extirpating it. Various Christian tribes were living in the vicinity of Medina, and the frontier of Syria, then a Christian territory, was not very far from it. All this non-Muslim population was actively hostile to Islam and the Muslims, who at that time scarcely exceeded three or four thousands in number. Under those circumstances, God revealed the verse under discussion to the Holy Prophet and had it conveyed to the unbelieving populace, who then enjoyed an overwhelming superiority over the Muslims in numbers, riches, power, influence and other earthly means. The contrast is striking enough. Which faith turns out to be true when judged by this criterion is not difficult to see. We need not add anything from ourselves. The testimony of Christian historians is strong enough on this point. Every student of history knows in what helpless condition the Muslims were when the verse was revealed and made public. Again, everybody knows how, in a few years, they made rapid strides towards prosperity, and how the poor Muslims once hemmed in on all sides by enemies, spread over every part of the earth, and again how their fears and dangers were converted into bright hopes and joys, and how their enemies, who previously enjoyed all earthly power and comfort, fell victims to all sorts of fear and grief. Thus, God decided the case in favour of the Muslims and, by His visible favours and blessings, demonstrated to the world that the Muslims were the only people who, in all reality, had faith in God and the Day of Judgment

It being the characteristic of the Holy Quran that it gives nothing in the form of a mere story, but every narrative is interspersed with useful words of advice for the spiritual uplifting of the reader; therefore, after enumerating all the wrong-doings of the Israelites, it goes on to say that although they have exceeded all bounds in sin, yet God's grace is infinitely great and adds that if they identify themselves with this new covenant, they, and even others, can again enjoy the gracious care of God (v. 63).

مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ الطُّورَ خُذْ وَأَمَّا آتِيتُكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا
مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ⁶⁴ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ

mīthāqa-kum wa-rafa'nū fauqa-kumut-Tūr ; Khudhū mā ātainū-kum bi-quwwatīn-wadh-kurū mā
'ihī, la'alla-kum tattaqūn. 65. Thumma tawallaitum mim-ba'di dhūlika, fa-lawlā faḍ-lul-

64. And (remember) when ' We took a covenant ' from you and ' raised Tūr, ' * i.e., Sinai
over you ; ' ' Take fast hold of what We have given you and bear in mind what is
herein, that ye may be saved.'

and did good deeds, and that, in striking contrast to
Islam, the faith of the Non-Muslim population was
merely nominal and their deeds not pleasing to God.

It cannot be urged here, by way of objection, that
if the criterion described above is a true one, then
the Christian domination over the Muslims at the
present day must be held as a proof of the truth of
Christianity. As a matter of fact, in the verse under
discussion, God has promised freedom from fears and
dangers to those who *actually* believe in God and the
Day of Judgment and do good deeds. The Muslims
of to-day are, as foretold by the Holy Prophet himself,
falling away from Islam, have ceased to act upon the
Holy Qur-ān, and are no better than the Israelites of
the days of Christ. Their degradation is by way
of punishment, in the fulfilment of the prophecy.
Of course, a renewal of the same promise is held
up to those who would accept the Promised Messiah.
His promise will be fulfilled not by earthly means
but by spiritual ones, and Islam will get ascendancy,
not at the point of the sword but by means of
 cogent arguments and convincing reasons. The
Promised Messiah has made his appearance and the
blessed millennium has already dawned.

Failing to grasp the meaning of this verse, some
men think that as, according to this verse, freedom
from fears and dangers is bound up with a belief in
God and the Day of Judgment, hence the Holy
Qur-ān holds any people believing in God and the
Judgment Day as saved. But this view is evidently
erroneous. Belief in God and the Judgment Day
includes belief in all the fundamentals of Islam.
Elsewhere, the Holy Qur-ān says:—

ان الذين يكفرون بالله ورسوله ويريدون ان يفرقوا
بين الله ورسوله ويقولون نؤمن ببعض ونكفر ببعض
ويريدون ان يتخذوا بين ذلك سبيلا اولئك
هم الكافرون حقا (نساء) -

"Of a truth, they who believe not in God and His
Messengers, and seek to separate God and His
Messengers, and say ' Some we believe and some we
believe not,' and desire to take a middle way, these
they are veritable infidels" (IV, 150).

This verse clearly shows that belief in God inclu-
des belief in prophets, which in turn includes a faith
in the books revealed to them.

At another place the Holy Qur-ān says:—

والذين يؤمنون بالاخرة يومنون به وهم على صلواتهم
يحافظون (انعام) -

"They who believe in the next life will believe in
it (the Qur-ān), and will keep strictly to their pray-
ers" (VI, 93). This verse tells us that belief in
God includes belief in the Holy Qur-ān and the
performance of devotions. Thus, belief in God and
the Judgment Day covers all the tenets emanating
therefrom.

1. *mīthāq* (covenant) here refers to the
Ten Commandments, which were given to Moses
on Mount Sinai. In this verse, the Israelites are
reminded of those commandments which they had
received, while standing at the foot of Sinai, and
upon which they had afterwards turned their backs.
God puts them in mind of the fact that they had
refused to lend an ear to the word of God for fear of
death.

2. Unable to grasp the true significance of this
verse, some men have taken the verse to mean that
Mount Sinai was uplifted over the heads of the Israe-
lites. Rodwell, in his Translation, ascribes this sense
to the words of the Holy Qur-ān and suggests that
the story was derived from the Jews who, accord-
ing to him, misunderstood Exodus XIX, 17. The

Reverting to the subject proper, in order to remind the Israelites of all their vices, mention is made of the
covenant which was taken from them at the foot of Mount Sinai, saying that they had broken the covenant in its entirety
vv. 64 and 65).

اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ⁶⁵ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ
 اُعْتَدُوا مِنْكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ⁶⁶ فَجَعَلْنَا

lāhi 'alaikum wa rahmatuhū la-kuntum minal-khāsirīn.

66. *Wa la-qad 'alimtu-mul-ladhi-na'tadau minkum fis-sabti fa-qulnū la-hum Kūnū qiradatan khāsi'in.* 67. *Fa-ja'alnā-hū*

65. "Then did ye turn back after this; and had it not been for Allah's grace towards you and His mercy, ye would surely have been of those who lose.

66. And verily, ye have known those of you who ^b profaned the Sabbath, and We said to them, "Become ye vile apes."

reality is that just as, according to Rodwell, the Jews have misunderstood Exodus XIX, 17, in the same way some men, accrediting the story of the Jews have read it into the words of the Holy Qur-ān as well. But, in fact, the verse carries no other import than that the covenant was taken at the time when the Israelites were standing at the base of the mountain. This meaning is quite consistent with the Arabic idiom. Although the words رفع (*Raf'*) and فوق (*Fauq*) are used respectively in the sense of 'holding aloft', and 'above,' yet they also bear the sense of height, as we read in *Kitābul Manāqib (Bukhārī)*: "Relating an account of the Holy Prophet's emigration to Medina, Abu Bakr, the first successor of the Holy Prophet, says:— While we were on our way to Medina, it became hot at noon, then رفع لنا صخرة طويلة لهاطل a long stone was raised high for us," which means that close by, they spied a big stone. In the Holy Qur-ān also, we read the words (احزاب) اذ جاءوكم من فوقكم (XXXIII, 11). Literally, the verse means, "The enemy came from above you", but actually it signifies, "the enemy made a descent from a higher position."

In short, the verse under discussion carries no meaning except that the Jews were made to stand at the foot of the mountain when the Commandments were given to them, and they entered into an agreement with God to keep the Commandments. The raising of the Mount is figuratively ascribed to God, because God had positively commanded them to stay at the foot of the Mount (*vide* Exodus XIX, 21).

1. This verse has also been misconstrued by many who have erroneously inferred from the word قردة (apes) that the profaners of the Sabbath were actually transformed into apes. This view is quite unwarranted. This narrative has been related by Holy Qur-ān at two other places also, which clearly show that those people did not actually turn apes but that the word "apes" is used symbolically. At one place the Holy Qur-ān says:—

قل هل أنبئكم بشر من ذلك مثوبة عند الله ط من لعنه الله وقضب عليه و جعل منهم القردة والخنازير و عبد الطاغوت ط اولئك شرمكانا و افل من سواء السبيل واذا جاءوكم قالوا آمنا وقد دخلوا بالكفروهم قد خرجوا به ط والله اعلم بما كانوا يكتمون (مائدة) -

It is also pointed out in passing that the covenant made it binding upon them, among other things, to keep the Sabbath (this was the easiest of the items because its observance required no great effort, hence the violation thereof was a clear proof of their utter disregard of the Divine commandments), and that some of them, as they knew, went the

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 نَكَالَ الْإِنسَانِ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا وَمَوْعِظَةً لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ۚ وَإِذْ قَالَ

nakālal-imā baina yadaihā wa mā khalfa-hā wa mau 'izatal-lil muttaqin. 68. Wa idh qāla

67. Thus We made it a warning to those of their day and those who came after them, and a lesson for the God-fearing.

EXPLANATORY NOTES—continued.

"Say! Should I tell you of a people worse off, in respect of retribution, in the sight of God than that which awaits them with God? They whom God has cursed and with whom He has been angry—and some of whom He has changed into apes and swine,—and the worshippers of Satan are in evil plight and have gone farthest astray from the right path! When they present themselves to you, they say, 'We believe'; but infidels they came in unto you, and infidels they went forth! God well knew what they concealed" (V, 61-62). This verse states with all clearness that the class of men who were under the curse and the wrath of God, who had become apes and swine, and who were the followers of Satan, used to come to the Holy Prophet and often said quite equivocally that they were among the believers, although their hearts were filled with disbelief. The Holy Qur-ān as well as the Traditions prove beyond the shadow of doubt that these people were not actually transformed into apes but that their transformation was only in character and spirit.

The second place where the Holy Qur-ān speaks of the Israelites as having been included in the category of apes occurs in Chapter VII, 164-169, where, speaking of the rebellious attitude of the Israelites, the Holy Qur-ān says:—"But when they proudly persisted in that which they had been forbidden, We said to them, Become scouted apes; and the Lord declared that until the day of the Resurrection, He would surely send against them (the Jews) those who should evil entreat and chastise them: Verily, right prompt is thy Lord to punish, and verily He is the Forgiving, and Merciful. And We have divided them upon the earth as peoples; some of them upright and some otherwise; and by good things and by evil things have We proved them; haply they will return to Us. And they had successors to succeed them: they have inherited the Book: they grasp this world's gear and say, 'It will be forgiven us!' Yet if the like temporal goods came to them *again*, they would *again* receive them" (Rodwell). Even a cursory glance at these verses is enough to convince every sane mind that the apes herein spoken of are not apes in shape, but that transgressors have been so called on account of their close resemblance to apes in character and spirit. God says about

them that they will continue to be seen till the last day of the world and will continue comprising good as well as evil persons, and that by means of a variety of trials, steps will be taken to bring them over to virtue. Thus, while the Holy Qur-ān speaks of a number of the Israelites having changed into apes, it itself explains the character of this conversion; and in the presence of the Quranic explanation, no legend can hold its own.

Besides this clear testimony of the Holy Qur-ān, there is another testimony drawn from Arabic Grammar. It is a general rule of Arabic Grammar that the suffixes *بن* and *ون* are added to the plurals of such words as refer to rational beings. In conformity to this rule, God has used, as a participle to qualify قردة (apes), the word خاسئين *khāsi'in* which has *بن* at the end, which shows that the word قردة (*qiradah*) alludes not to any irrational beings, but to rational ones who had adopted the character of apes. Had the Holy Qur-ān meant actual conversion into apes, it would have used the opposite participle into apes, *khāsi'ah* and not خاسئين *khāsi'in*.

The learned men of the past have also held the above cited view. *Mujahid* who is considered to be the greatest of the commentators and is among the *Tabi'in* (the immediate successors of the Holy Prophet's Companions) says:—

مسخت قلوبهم ولم يمسخوا قردة وانما هو مثل ضربه الله لهم

i.e., "Their hearts were disfigured. They were not disfigured physically, but God has used the phrase figuratively (*vide Ibin-i-Kathir*, Vol. I, p. 179). Other eminent authorities for this interpretation are, *Qatāda*, *Rabi'* and *Abu Malik*. *Abul 'Aliyah* holds the same view, interpreting the words قردة خاسئين as اذله صاغرين i.e., "disgraced and humiliated."

To sum up, the Holy Qur-ān explains itself when it uses the word 'apes' for the Israelites: *First*, it means to say that they became disgraced. Just as the ape is at the beck and call of the showman who makes it do whatever he likes,

length of breaking this condition too and were, of course, disgraced (vv. 66 and 67). As this event occurred after Moses, it is not therefore begun with *واذ* i.e. "and (remember) when" but, unlike other incidents, it has been commenced with the words "and verily ye have known" in order to point out that the episode was referred to by the way. It has been introduced as an instance of grossest disobedience on the part of the Israelites. So far, by detailing, in order, the favours conferred upon them, first for their social advancement, secondly, for their spiritual edification, and thirdly, for their everyday comforts, the reality is pressed home upon the Israelites that God has done the fullest justice to His covenant with the Israelites, whereas they have shown the worst example of vow-breaking and their conduct is the most heinous model of ingratitude for every kind of goodness received. Thus it is pointed out that,

مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقَرَةً قَالُوا أَتَتَّخِذُ نَاهِرُؤُا
 قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ⁶⁸ قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ
 يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَا فَارِضٌ وَلَا بِكْرٌ
 عَوَانٌ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ فافْعَلُوا مَا تُؤْمَرُونَ⁶⁹ قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ
 يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا لَوْهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ صَفْرَاءٌ فَاقِعٌ

Mūsā li-qaumi-hi innallāha ya'muru-kum an tadhbahū baqarah, qūlu a-tattakhidhūnā huzurwā ; qūla a'udhu billāhi an akūna minūl-jāhilin.

69. *Qālud'u lanā Rabba-ka yubayyil-lanā mā hiya ; qūla innahū yaqūlu inna-hū baqaratul-lā faridun-wa lā bīkr, 'awānum-baina dhālik, faf'alū mā tu'marūn.* 70. *Qālud'u lanā Rabba ka yubayyil-lanā mā launu-hū ; qūla inna hu yaqūlu inna-hū baqaratun ṣafrā'u, fūqī'ul-*

68. And (remember) when Moses said to his people, 'Verily Allāh commands you to slaughter a cow.' They said, 'Dost thou make a jest of us?' He said, 'I seek refuge with Allāh from being one of the ignorant.'

69. They said, 'Pray thy Lord for us to make plain to us what she is like.' He answered, 'Verily, Allāh says, It is a cow, neither old nor young, of a middle age between the two ; do ye then what ye are commanded.'

EXPLANATORY NOTES—concluded.

in the same way, the Israelites will become subject to alien rulers who would deal with them according to their own stern will, and the Israelites will have no voice in the administration of Government. *Secondly*, the ape is by nature a mimic. It delights in imitating others. Similarly, the Holy Qur-ān purports to say that a class from among the

Israelites have become so corrupt that there is no fear of God in their hearts. Their actions are mere grimaces lacking reality. They adhere to the shell ignoring the kernel altogether. They even pose as Muslims when they happen to go to the latter, and become as much Jews again as before when they return to their own people.

in the face of such conduct on their part, it is idle to expect that prophets be raised from among them, and that by repeatedly breaking the solemn vow they have rendered themselves unworthy of the favours promised to the sons of Isaac through Abraham. To bring the charge home, one more instance of disobedience is added, which illustrates their behaviour towards Moses. Accordingly, in verses 68-72, we are told how on receipt of a commandment for sacrifice, they worried Moses with a lot of questions and put themselves into trouble, thus showing that in all matters, small or great, they were given to opposition. Here the details as to how the Israelites behaved themselves in the days

لَوْنَهَا تَسْرُ النَّظِيرِينَ⁷⁰ قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ الْبُقَرَاءَ
تَشَبَهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّا لَنَ شَاءُ اللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ⁷¹ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ
لَا ذَلُولٌ تُثِيرُ الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَا شِيَةَ فِيهَا قَالُوا
الْأَنْ جِئْتَ بِالْحَقِّ فَنَذَ بَجُوهَا وَمَا كَادُوا يَفْعَلُونَ⁷² وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمُ

Ch. 8

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launu-hū tasurrun-nāzirīn.

71. *Qālud'u lanā Rabba-ka yubayyil-lanā mū hiya, innal-baqara tashūbaha' alainā, wa innā in shā-'Allāhu la-muhtadūn.*

72. *Qāla innahū yaqūlu innahā baqaratul lū tuthīrul arḍa wa lā tasqil-harthā, musal lamatul-lā shiyata fī-hū; qālul-āna ji'ta bil-ḥaqq; fa-dhabahūhū wa mū kādū yaf'alūn.*

R. 9. 73. *Wa idh qataltum*

70. They said, 'Pray thy Lord for us to make plain to us what her colour is.' He answered, 'He says, Verily, she is a dun cow, intensely dun, delighting the beholders.'

71. They said, 'Call on thy Lord for us to make plain to us what sort of cow it is, for cows appear to us alike; and if Allāh will, we shall assuredly be guided.'

72. He answered: 'He says, It is a cow not broken in to plough the earth or water the tilth, a sound one, with no spot on her.' They said, 'Now hast thou brought the truth.' Then they slaughtered her, though they had all but left it undone.'

1. (vv. 68—72). The Israelites used to live in Egypt and Pharaohs, the Kings of Egypt, had great veneration for the cow. Thus, an infatuated reverence for the cow also crept into the minds of the Israelites and, as verse 49 of this chapter and Exodus XXXII show, when they made an object of worship for themselves they made it in the shape of a cow. It is enough to convince us that their excessive reverence for the cow had culminated into adoration. As the primary object for which prophets are sent is to put an end to the deification of creatures, and to manifest the glory of the one true God of the world—the Lord and Master of all creatures—it was, therefore, imperatively essential that the Law of Moses should have provided means for stamping out from the Israelites the evil practice of deifying the cow. Had it not been done, the Israelites would certainly have relapsed into cow-worship. For this purpose, the Mosaic Law several times repeated the injunction for the sacrifice of the

cow. The reason for this important ordinance is not far to seek. A nation which continues slaughtering an animal can never think of deifying it. In the verses under discussion, mention is made of Moses having ordered the Israelites to sacrifice a cow. At first, they tried to put it off by evasive questioning, but at last quite reluctantly they felt bound to carry out the behests of Moses. The narrative reads thus in the Bible:—

"And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, this is the ordinance of the Law which the Lord hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel that they bring the red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish and upon which never came yoke: and ye shall give her unto Eleazar, the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp, and shall slay her before his face: and Eleazar, the priest, shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven

نَفْسًا فَادَّرَأْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ٧٣
بَعْضُهَا كَذَلِكَ يُحْيِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَى وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ إِنَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ٧٤

nafsan faddāra'tum fī-hā, wallāhu mukhrijum-mā kuntum taktumūn.

74. *Fa-qul-naḍribūhu bi-ba'di-hū; kadhālīka yuhyillū-hul-mawtā wa yurī-kum āyātihī la'allakum ta'qilūn.* 75. *Thumma*

R. 9.

73. And (remember) "when ye attempted to kill a person and differed among yourselves about it; and Allāh would bring to light what ye concealed.

74. Then We said, 'Smite it* for a part of its (sin).' Thus Allāh 'gives life to the dead and shows you His signs that ye may understand.'

* i.e., the class responsible for the sufferings of the man whose murder was attempted.

times; and one shall burn the heifer in his sight: her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn: and the priest shall take cedarwood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer. Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterwards he shall come into the camp and the priest shall be unclean until the even. And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water and bathe his flesh in water and shall be unclean until the even. And the man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Isreal for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin" (Numbers XIX, 1-9).

The Quranic version differs slightly from the Biblical. According to the Holy Qur-ān, the Israelites were at first bidden to slaughter an ordinary cow, but as they began to ask useless questions by way of equivocation, some conditions were added to specify the cow. On the other hand, the Biblical version makes no mention of this questioning, but tells us that at the very outset the Israelites were ordered to slaughter a cow answering a particular description. Again, the narrative of the Holy Qur-ān shows that the Israelites were not willing to comply with this injunction but at last felt compelled to do it. On the other hand, the Bible story stops short at the issue of the commandment and fails to throw any light on the manner in which the divine behest was executed. For a

careful student of Israelite history it is not hard to see through all these differences which side the truth lies. It is too much to believe that the people, who were accustomed to defying the bidding of Moses and who were often prepared to fight with him on receipt of an injunction against their wishes, carried out without question the stringent orders to slaughter a cow. It appears that this portion of the narrative was somehow or other left out of the Biblical story at the very inception, or the Israelites themselves expunged it later on.

1. (vs. 73 and 74). The Holy Qur-ān has not named the person slain, but the word *نفسا* (*nafsan*) used for him is, in the terminology of Arabic grammar, *نكرة* (*Nakirah*), which often denotes a sense of grandeur. So, the wording of the verse itself points to the inference that the person killed is a remarkably grand personality. This view finds further support from the consideration that although the Israelites committed thousands of murders, yet the Holy Qur-ān has singled out one, which shows that the murdered personage is an important figure and his murder constitutes an offence of so great a magnitude that for it the whole nation is condemned and deprived of the favours of God. Such a one can be no other than a prophet. Thus, we are led pretty near to the identity of the slain personage spoken of in this verse. Our investigation has so far enabled us to affirm with absolute certainty that he was a prophet. The verse also enlightens us on another important fact. It shows that the Israelites

As this much was not sufficient to establish their blameworthiness, because prophets continued to appear among them in spite of these wrongdoings on their part, so, after mentioning the breaches of faith and the hostilities displayed by them in the early days during the fulfilment of the promise given to Abraham, the Holy Qur-an passes over all the intervening events and chronicles the last and the most serious of their misdeeds, which, of course, deprived them of the favours of God. This was their attempt to kill Jesus of Nazareth (vv. 73, 74) who was the last of the Israelite prophets.

EXPLANATORY NOTES—concluded.

entertained doubts as to his death. These considerations settle for us the personality of the person slain. We find that Jesus Christ was the only *prophet* in whose murder the Israelites were involved as a nation and about whose death doubts had been entertained. So the person spoken of in this verse can be no other than Jesus Christ. This fact goes a great way towards determining the identity of the murdered man. But it must be remembered in this connection that the word *qatal-tum* (قتلتم) does not signify that the soul of Jesus was made to depart from his body, because, as amply proved in other verses of the Holy Qur-ān, Jesus did not die on the cross (*Vide* IV, 158). So *qatal-tum* (قتلتم) simply means "You almost killed" him; and the word *qatl* (قتل) 'put to death' is used because the Israelites had left no stone unturned to kill him, although he was not actually killed. What more could they do than nail him to the cross? It was only through God's grace that he was taken down alive. As already shown in Note No. 1, p. 53, the word *qatl* (قتل) is also used to denote a state very much akin to destruction. It is not an uncommon practice in the Arabic language that a word standing for a certain idea is used to convey an idea not exactly the same, but bearing close resemblance to it. As for instance, *sleep* is sometimes denoted by *موت* *maut*, a word used for *death*; and the idea of 'giving up one thing to take another' is expressed by the word *اشترى* *Ishtirā* (to purchase). Consequently, as the Holy Qur-ān elsewhere clearly points out that Jesus did not die on the cross (IV, 158), so *qatal-tum* (قتلتم) cannot here be construed to mean "you killed" him, but the true significance will be, "you accorded to him a treatment which usually results in death and almost reduced him to the state of death". This is corroborated by the evidence of the Gospels, where it is narrated that Jesus was nailed to the cross late in the day and was taken down speedily because the next day was the Sabbath. When taken down he was in a precarious condition and the state of collapse was very much like death; but surely he had not died, for the circulating blood had not yet ceased to run in his veins (John XIX, 34). In short *واذ قتلتم* (*Wa idh qatal-tum*) refers to the attempts of the Israelites at the murder of Christ, and *فادّرعتم فيها* 'ye differed among yourselves about it,' to their doubts as to his having died on the cross. Further account of the Gospels also confirms the above view. Some of the Jews, noticing that Jesus had been too soon taken down, that his bones had not broken as in the case of the two criminals who had been hung on the cross along with him, that his body had been given over to a disciple of his, who, instead of interring him in a grave, had placed him in a hewn chamber, went to

the Governor and persuaded him to appoint guards over the sepulchre. But others too surely took the death-like state for actual death. At last, the latter view gained ground among the Jews and by and by became an admitted fact.

The clause *والله مخرج ما كنتم تكتمون* "And Allāh would bring to light what ye concealed" contains a prophecy that a time would come when the truth about Christ's death would come to light. The prophecy has come true. With the appearance of the Promised Messiah, the mask which had so long been hanging over the incident has at last been thrown off.

فقلنا اضربوه ببعضها "We said, Smite it (the nation) for a part of its (sin)," means that God ordered the angels to punish the Israelites for the attempted murder of Christ. Although angels are not expressly spoken of in this verse, yet as heavenly punishments are always carried out through angels, it is clear that it is the angels that are addressed here. They are ordered to chastise the Jews as a *partial* punishment of their offence, showing that the rest of the punishment will be given hereafter. Some offences are such as are punished in both the worlds, and the persecution of the prophets is among such offences. *كذلك يحيى الله الموتى*, 'Thus Allāh gives life to the dead,' shows the way in which God restores the dead to life. That is to say, when in this world God speaks of the dead having been raised to life, He does not mean "the dead" in the literal sense of the word, the case of Jesus being an instance in point. So one of the meanings of 'raising the dead' is to bring them back to life from a state of extreme hopelessness, as was done in the case of Jesus. Another meaning is to bring to destruction the enemies of the person killed. In this sense the word, *احياء* *iḥya*, 'to bring to life,' often occurs in the Holy Qur-ān. But with regard to Jesus, a third significance is also possible. For nineteen centuries it was the general conviction among his friends and foes that he died on the cross, but in the time of the Promised Messiah, God brought the fact to light through him that Jesus was taken down from the cross *alive*, and placed *alive* in the sepulchre, in the fulfilment of the prophecy: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the son of man be in the heart of the earth" (Matthew XII, 40).

Reading the verse under discussion in conjunction with the previous one, some translators hold that an actually dead man was restored to life. This interpretation is quite erroneous, and is not based on the wording of the verse, but rests on baseless legends found only in Israelite traditions and not at all in the Holy Qur-ān or the sayings of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him).

قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً ۚ وَ
 إِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ ۚ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشْقُوقُ
 فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ ۚ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَمَا اللَّهُ
 بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ⁷⁵ ۝ أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ

qasat qulūbu-kum mim-ba'di dhālika fa-hiya kal-hijārati au ashaddu qaswah; wa inna minal hijārati lamū yatafajjaru min-hul-anhār; wa inna minhā lamū yashshaqqaqu fa-yakhruju minhal-mū; wa inna minhā lamū yahbiṭu min khashyatillāh; wa mallāhu bi-ghāfilin 'ammū ta'mālūn.

76. *A-fa-taṭma'ūna an-yu'minū la-kum wa qad kāna farīqum*

75. Then "your hearts became hard after that, so they are like stones or harder still : for surely of the stones there are some from which streams flow, and surely of them there are some which cleave asunder, and water issues forth from them ; and surely of them there are some which humble themselves for fear of Allāh ; and Allāh is not unmindful of what ye do.'

1. In this verse, the Jews are told that even some lifeless things are also useful, but they though possessing common sense, have always followed a crooked policy and opposed every prophet, and ignored even the dictates of their own conscience. At the same time it has also been added that these remarks do not apply to the whole nation, and that some of the Israelites were such as were, no doubt, swayed by the fear of God.

According to the above interpretation, the pronoun *hū* (them) in *اللَّهُ* (and surely of *them* there are some which humble themselves for fear of Allāh) stands for *قلوب* "the hearts;"

and the fact that while other pronouns in this verse refer to *حجارة* "stones" and this one to *قلوب*, "the hearts" need not create any doubt. The Holy Qur-ān contains many such instances. For example we read in Chapter XLVIII, 10 :—

لَقَوْمُنَا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَنَعَزُّوهُ وَنُقَرِّبُهُ
 تَسْبِيحًا بِكْرًا وَاصِيلًا ۝ (الفتح)

i.e., "That ye may believe in God, and His Prophet, and may aid him, and honour him, and glorify Him, morning and evening." In this verse the pronoun 'him' refers to the Holy Prophet in the first two places, and to God in the third. Another instance of this kind is met with in verse 229 of this chapter.

After a brief relation of the story it is pointed out that in the face of their wrong-doings God had always shown pity to them, till at last there was raised among them a grand prophet, Jesus, who was the greatest of all the Israelite prophets after Moses. But even he was cruelly attacked and more badly treated than Moses. So they had to abide by the consequences. Formerly God showed mercy to them, and in spite of their evil doings gave them a chance to reform themselves, but after this event the Israelites were left to themselves, and as a result they became hard-hearted and incapable of guidance. This was the natural fruit of their own deeds (v. 75). As the Jews could advance the pretext that the

مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يَحْرِفُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوا وَهُمْ
يَعْلَمُونَ⁷⁶ ○ وَإِذْ الْقَوَالِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ
إِلَى بَعْضٍ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ تُوتُومُهُمْ بِمَافَتَحَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَاجُّوكُمْ بِهِ

minhum yasma'una kalāmallāhi thumma yuharrifūna-hū mim-ba'di mā 'aqa'lūhu wa hum ya'lamūn. 77. Wa idhū laqulladhīna āmanū qālū āmannā, wa idhū khatā ba'qu-hum ilā ba'din qālū atuḥaddithūna-hum bimā fataḥallāhu 'alai-kum li-yuḥājjū-kum bihī

76. What ! expect ye that they should believe you? Yet a class among them heard the word of Allāh, and then "perverted it after they had understood it, while they knew."

1. In this verse the Muslims are warned against being deluded into the hope that the Israelites will accept what they say and make no mischief. The reason why the Muslims should be on their guard against their mischief is clear. The Israelites knew the scriptures and understood the meaning thereof, and yet wilfully tampered with the text of the divine word. When the word of God fared so profanely at their hands, nothing could stand in their way of perverting agreements and plighted words with the Muslims.

It will not be out of place here to point out that in this verse only a portion of the Jews are referred to and not all of them. This means that the whole Jewish community is not to blame. Of course, the whole community cannot become corrupted. A fraction, however small it may be, always holds true to the side of God. It is among the characteristics of the Holy Qur-ān that while painting the dark side of a thing, it does not ignore the bright side of it; and while denouncing a class of men, it takes care to exclude those who act in good faith. The same principle is followed here as well. While mentioning certain defects of the Israelites and the Arabs, the Holy Qur-ān has not failed to point out that the whole community is not corrupt, and that there are some who have no hand in these vices and who, as the previous verse clearly declares, are moved by the fear of God and stand for what they believe to be true.

The religious controversialists of these days can learn from the Holy Qur-ān this highly valuable lesson which is sure to give an infinitely useful turn to religious discussions and thereby go a long way towards promoting the peace of the world. The wholesale denunciation of a community or the identification of the entire class with the particular failings of some of its individuals is a fruitful source of strife and ill-will. If some of the European writers keep this golden rule in view, the existing gulf that divides Christianity and Islam is bound to disappear, there remaining nothing but an honest difference of views.

In connection with this verse, it should be borne in mind that while the Holy Qur-ān has exonerated a portion of the Israelites from the charge of opposition to Islam out of mischief, it has also given a word of caution for the Muslims, who are required to be on the alert, not only against the mischief-mongers, but also against the passive fraction of the Israelites; for the latter, though not actively hostile, are yet under the influence of their wicked kinsmen who have no scruples about interfering with the word of God. It is possible that the mischievous majority may some day prevail upon these innocent people to participate in their hostile attitude towards Islam. Muslims are, therefore, warned against reposing too much confidence in the good will of the passive portion of the Israelites.

deeds related were done by their ancestors and not by them and that everybody was responsible for his own actions, so it was necessary to enumerate those evils too which the Jews of the Holy Prophet's time were accustomed to do. But as the Muslims were under the impression that Jews being a people of the Book and the descendants of the Prophets, were more susceptible to guidance than others and therefore maintained all sorts of connections with them, so in these verses the Muslims themselves, instead of the Jews, are addressed to enable them to realize their mistake. First of all, the greatest offences of the Jews are stated which prove that among their own ranks there were some who had no faith even in their own books. Accordingly in verse 76, speaking of the wealthy and influential classes from among the Jews, it is said that although they are not well versed in the theological lore, yet they heard from the learned men the books which they believe to be the word of God, and made alterations in them to suit their own ends.

عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ⁷⁷ ۝ أَوَلَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ
وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ⁷⁸ ۝ وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُّونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَانِيٌّ وَإِنْ هُمْ

'inda Rabbi-kum, a-fa-lā ta'qilūn.

78. A-wa lā ya'lamūna annallāha ya'lamu mā yusirrūna wa mā yu'linūn.

79. Wa min-hum ummiyyūna lā ya'lamūna kitāba illā amāniyya wa in hum

i.e., on the
basis of.

77. And "when they meet those who believe, they say, 'We believe,' and when they meet one another in secret, they say, 'What! ye inform them of what Allāh has unfolded to you, that they may reason with you according* to the word of your Lord. Do ye not then understand?'

78. Do they not know that Allāh 'knows what they conceal and what they disclose?'

1. In verse 77 it is told that some of the Jews pretend to be Muslims in the presence of the believers, but when they are away from the Muslims, some of them feel sorry for others saying that they go to the Muslims to enlighten the latter on what God has revealed to them, i.e., they let the Muslims know the prophecies contained in their scriptures about the Last Prophet, thereby enabling the Muslims to establish the truth of their Prophet on the authority of the Jewish scriptures. In reply to this, the Holy Qur-ān says that these people are too ignorant to understand that if the Holy Qur-ān is the word of man and Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him) is (نَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ) a false prophet, there can be no harm in disclosing the prophecies, because the conditions and circumstances which are to characterise the advent and the personality of the true prophet cannot be made applicable to a false one. None but the real and genuine prophet can avail himself of the distinguishing features given in their scriptures about him. A false one will never be able to satisfy those conditions. How can one profit by the prophecies contained in previous scriptures, unless he can make them fit in with his case? But if he can satisfy those conditions successfully, surely he is the true prophet. Their apprehension is justified only in the case of the true prophet,

but even then the fear is of no avail, because a prophet receives all knowledge from God. He does not depend upon the Jews or any other people for his knowledge, for God Himself reveals everything to him.

We have rendered the phrase *عند ربكم* as "according to the word of your Lord." Other translators have put it as "before your Lord." It is true that the phrase can also bear the latter significance, but it fails to suit the context. The statement that they should not tell the Muslims such things as will afford a chance for the Muslims to dispute with them *before God* cannot be ascribed to the Jews who believed God to be All-knowing. How could the Jews suppose God to be ignorant of what they believed to have been revealed to them by God Himself? How could the Jews say that Muslims would remind God of those things and thereby the Jews would have to bear shame? This is hopelessly absurd. The correct and the most suitable rendering is "according to the word of your Lord." This translation is in perfect conformity with the Arabic idiom and the spirit and language of the Holy Qur-ān. The word *'inda* is used in the Arabic language in different senses; 'according to the word or judgment of' being one of them. The Arabic phrase

Besides them, there was another class of Jews who quite hypocritically remained mixed with the Muslims, and though conscious of their difference of faith from the latter, they chimed in with them from purely worldly motives, bearing witness to the prophecies contained in their books about the Holy Prophet (vv. 77, 78).

الْأَيْظُنُونَ ۚ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ

illā yazunnūn.

80. *Fā-wailul-lilladhīna yaktubūnal-kitāba bi-aidī-him, thumma yaqūluna*

79. And some of them are illiterate who know not the Book, but *entertain* false hopes¹; and "they do not but conjecture.

كذا 'indāl-lāhi kadhū, means "Such is in the word of God." The Holy Qur-ān itself corroborates this meaning of the word 'inda'. In connection with the injunction to produce four witnesses to prove a charge of adultery, we read in the Holy Qur-ān:—

فَإِذَا لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِالشَّهَادَةِ فَلَا تُحْسِبُوا أَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ (نور)

i.e., "If they fail to bring forward the witnesses, they are liars according to the word of God" (XXIV, 14). In this verse the word 'inda' can bear no other significance. One who brings a charge of adultery against somebody must be called upon to substantiate the charge by the corroborative evidence of four witnesses, failing which he will be declared a liar in accordance with the word of God and his charge a false one, so that liars may be deterred from trumping up false charges against their enemies out of malice. We cannot take the verse as signifying that the accuser will be a liar in the sight of God after his failure to produce four witnesses. It is preposterous to say so, because God does not stand in need of an evidence to prove the reality. In short, it admits of no doubt that the word 'inda' is used in the sense of "according to the word or judgment of."

The Rev. Dr. Wherry erroneously infers from this verse that "ignorant Jews related the stories imperfectly to the followers of Muhammad who repeated them still more imperfectly to their prophet who embodied them in the Qur-ān." Far from lending any support to this assertion, the verse under discussion gives the lie to it, and proves beyond the vestige of doubt that the Holy Qur-ān has proceeded from no earthly source but from God. An informant, as a matter of course, receives encouragement and not disgrace at the hands of those whom he supplies information. Consequently, if the Holy Prophet, in reality, depended upon the information which his followers used to hear from the Jews, then the Jews ought to have been encouraged, but, on the contrary, we find their doings openly denounced and condemned. After this public deprecation of their deeds,

it was impossible for the Jews to continue furnishing the Muslims with any sort of information from their scriptures. This open and unstinted condemnation of the Jews is an eloquent testimony to the fact that the Holy Prophet needed no help from them, but that his knowledge flowed from the heavenly fount. Contemporary history also brings to light the notable fact that when some of the Jews began to mix with the Muslims hypocritically, the Holy Prophet forbade their entry into the Muslim compound.

This verse further shows that Islam is an enemy to simulation, however beneficial it may be to its interest

1. اُمْنِيَّة (Umniyyah), the singular of اُمْنِيَّة *amāniyya* means "desire," "hope," "falsehood," "reading." So this verse signifies that some of the Jews have no knowledge of the Book, but they entertain false hopes and desires, and, instead of understanding the Book and basing their faith on the conviction of mind, depend upon their own caprice.

There is no justification for the notion that the word *amāniyya*, being a *mustathnā* (an exception) to "the book" must bear a meaning cognate to the word 'book.' In the Arabic language there are two kinds of *Mustathnā* (exceptions):— (1) *مستثنى متصل* or 'a cognate exception,' (2) *مستثنى منقطع* or 'a foreign exception.' The first kind refers to an exception out of an afore-mentioned or known class, as *أحلت لكم بهيمة الأنعام إلا ما يتلى عليكم* *i.e.*, "All domestic quadrupeds are made lawful to you except those already recited to you". (V, 2) In this verse *ما يتلى عليكم* 'those already recited to you' are excepted from *بهيمة الأنعام* "the domestic quadrupeds." In the second kind the exception is not made from any expressed or implied group, as *لا عاصم اليوم إلا من رحم (هود)* *i.e.*, "That day nobody will be able to save from the decrees of God, except those on whom God shows

In addition to these, there was then a third class of people who had no knowledge of the Book, but who entertained false hopes and desires and based their religion on whims (v. 79).

هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۖ فَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا كَتَبَتْ
أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ⁸⁰ وَقَالُوا لَنْ تَمْسَسَنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا

hādha min 'indillāhi li-yashtarū bi-hi thamanan qalilā; fa-wai-lulla-hum-mimmū katabat aidī-him wa-wailul-la-hum mimma yaksibūn.

81. *Wa qālū lan tamassanā-nāru illā*

80. Woe, therefore, to those who write the book with their own hands, then say 'This is from Allāh,' that they may sell it for a paltry price. Woe, then, to them for what their hands have written, and woe to them for what they have earned.¹

mercy." (XI, 44). It does not mean that those on whom God shows mercy *will be able to save*, but, on the other hand, it means that those on whom God shows mercy *will be saved*. In the verse under discussion also, the *Mustathnā* is *Mustathnā Mutlaq* (foreign exception) which is not cognate to "the Book" in meaning. It implies that knowledge of these people is not derived from the book, but is confined to their desires and wishes.

1. In this verse mention is made of a fourth class of the Jews, who themselves wrote books and gave them out as the word of God. History tells us that this malpractice was rife among the Jews. As a result, we find that, in addition to the existing Bible, there are a number of books which are declared by their authors to be divine revelation, so that it has now become absolutely impossible to distinguish the revealed books from the fabricated ones. Similarly, another mischievous artifice was often resorted to. They themselves wrote a book and declared it to be based on Biblical evidence while, as a matter of fact, the former ran directly against the latter. As these people were a class of learned men who generally lead the ignorant masses, they were particularly threatened with punishment, because their evil example had given rise to the afore-mentioned three classes of Jews. When the doctors of any religion take to inculcating false teachings and try to ascribe divine origin to their own words, their example emboldens many others. Influenced by their unworthy example, some begin to imitate them in tampering with the word of God as alluded to in verse 76; and others prefer worldiness to religion, as referred to in verse 77; and others again take to following their own guess-work and caprice as a resort of their own ignorance and blind faith in the word of others, as evidenced in verse 79. As these scholars were also responsible for the transgressions of their followers, hence, while speak-

ing of them, the Holy Qur-ān has used the word *ويل*, *wail* (woe), in order to instil the fear of God into their minds, reminding them of their duty and thereby creating in them a clear consciousness of the lawful fact that interference with the word of God is an unpardonable offence, and that bartering faith for worldly gain or distorting the word of God for the purpose of gaining some worldly end is a still more serious and inexcusable iniquity.

Some Christian writers have in vain attempted to force quite an unwarranted corollary out of this verse. They assert that this warning to the Jews against tampering with the divine scriptures is a testimony to the existence of the true Bible at that time. If there had been, they contend, no genuine version extant at that time, how could the Qur-ān have blamed them for interference with the original text? But this inference is absolutely unjustified. The Holy Qur-ān emphatically declares the previous scriptures as corrupted (*vide* V. 49; II, 107). Hence, it is impossible to read into this verse a meaning quite contrary to a number of other verses of the Holy Qur-ān. Again, the reference to tampering with the text does not necessarily mean tampering with the genuine text. It is not consistent with the dictates of reason and rectitude that only the act of tampering with the real and true text may be held as punishable and that of tampering with the false one be allowed to go unpunished. In fact, it is the mischievous intention that calls for punishment, and, therefore, one who, out of mischief, tampers with the version of a false book which he believes to be a true one, is as liable to punishment as the one who tampers with a genuine scripture. A fair Christian critic will not hold a Hindu interfering with the text of the Vedas as less guilty than a Christian interfering with the version of the Gospels, although from Christian point of view,

But there was a fourth class who led the foregoing three classes and were therefore responsible for their weaknesses. They were the theologians who intentionally tampered with the books they knew to be divine. Thus this group not only itself went astray, but also misled others (v. 80).

أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَةً ۖ قُلْ أَتَّخَذُتُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَهْدًا فَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ
 عَهْدَهُ ۚ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ۚ بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً
 81 وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ۚ
 82 وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا

ayyāmam-ma'dudah ; qul attakhadhtum 'indallāhi' ahdan fa-laṇ-yukhlifallāhu 'ahdahū am taquluna 'alallāhi mū lā ta'lamūn.

82. *Balā man kasaba sayyi'atan-wa ahūtat bi-hi khaṭi'ātu-hu fa 'ulā'ika aṣḥābun-nār, hum fī hā khūlī-dūn.*

83. *Wal-ladhīna āmanu wa 'amiluṣ-ṣāliḥāti 'ulā'ika aṣḥābul-jannah, hum fī hā*

81. And they say, "The Fire shall not touch us save for a number of days.' Say, 'Have ye received a promise from Allāh? Then surely Allāh will not act against His promise. Or, ascribe ye to Allāh what ye know not?'

82. Yea 'whoso does evil and is encompassed by his sins,-those are the inmates of 'the Fire; therein shall they abide.

EXPLANATORY NOTES—continued.

the latter tries to mar the truth and the former to worsen the untruth, yet in the light of the fact that both attempt to alter what they believe to be the real word of God, both will be adjudged as equally blameworthy, because the act in either case flows from an equally sinister motive. It is now quite clear that the allusion of the Holy Qur-ān to the blameworthiness of the Jewish scholars, who in their writings distorted the word of God to suit their own ends or who gave out their own writing as the word of God, thereby making themselves responsible for the wrong-doing of others, does by no means support the view that the Jews had the original text with them at the time of the Holy

Prophet. For, altering the real book or the false one believed to be real is in either case the outcome of an evil mind, and is therefore in both cases an offence of equal magnitude. If we admit that only the perversion of truth and not the aggravation of falsehood is an evil, even then the tampering with the corrupted scriptures is decidedly culpable, because, notwithstanding their questionable purity, they contain a good deal of fragmentary truth, which is of immense benefit to every careful student of religion. Consequently one who attempts to tamper with them even in their present condition attempts to pervert quite a number of truths.

After stating clearly the evil practices rife among the Jews about their own scriptures, the Holy Qur-an proceeds to set forth the cause which accounts for this arrogance and recklessness of the Jews. These evil practices of the Jews, the Holy Qur-an points out, are due to the wrong notion that they were absolutely immune from punishment or, if punished at all, the punishment must be very brief. This notion has emboldened them so much that some have even corrupted their own faith, while others have become utterly indifferent to it, thinking that the punishment in the next world, if inflicted on them at all, would be very light, although this idea is not found even in their own scriptures (v. 81). The truth is that he who has an overwhelming preponderance of evil must meet with punishment, to whatever caste or creed he

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خُلِدُونَ⁸³ وَإِذَا أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا
 اللَّهَ⁸³ وَيَالِ الْوَالِدِينَ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَ
 قُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ
 إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ⁸⁴ وَإِذَا أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ

khalidūn. R. 10. 84. Wa idh akhadhnū mithāqa Banī Isrā'ila lū ta'buduna illallāh, wa bil-wālidaini ihsānan wa dhil qurbā wal yatāmā wal masūkīni wa qulu lin-nāsi husnan-wa aqimuṣ-ṣalāta wa ātuz-zakah; thumma tarwallai-tum illū qalīlam-minkum wa antum mu'rifūn.

58. *Wa idh akhadhnū mithāqa-kum*

83. But they who believe and do good deeds, those are the inmates of "heaven ; therein shall they abide'.

R. 10.

84. And (remember) when We took from the children of Israel 'the covenant : 'Ye shall worship nothing but Allāh, and show kindness to your parents and kindred and orphans and the poor, and say to men what is good, and observe prayer and pay the * *Zakāt*' ; then ye turned away, except a few of you, and ye swerved aside².

* i. e. legal
alms.

1. (81-83) Almost all the religions of the world monopolise salvation for their adherents and condemn others to everlasting hell. The case of the Jews has been quoted in this verse. They considered that the punishment of hell, if meant for them at all, will last for a few days only. We learn from history that, at the time of the Holy Prophet, some of the Jews thought that the punishment of the Jews would not extend over more than forty days, but some even looked upon this period as too long and reduced it to seven days only. As for the Jews of to-day, Sale says : " It is a received opinion among the Jews at present that no person, be he ever so wicked, or of whatever sect, shall remain in hell above eleven months or at most a year ; except Dathan and Abiram and atheists who will be tormented there to all eternity". The Christians extend the concession still further. They consider that mere faith in Atonement absolves them from all the sins and entitles them to salvation. It is impossible, they hold, to obtain salvation through the

Law. A belief in Christ, according to them, facilitates salvation to the extent of exempting men from the necessity of good deeds, while unbelief in Christ is regarded by them as entailing eternal punishment. The Hindus and Zoroastrians also hold similar views. For those within the pale of these creeds, punishment is reduced to an insignificant minimum while for those outside their fold punishment knows no bounds. They have, moreover, confined their faith to certain castes. Islam has raised its powerful voice against such notions, declaring them to be false. Accordingly, speaking of the Jews, God has impressed upon the mind of the reader the unreasonableness and absurdity of their notion about salvation in the light of sound principles. Islam does not lend the least support to the idea that salvation will be a free gift to a certain class of men in whose case punishment, if resorted to at all, will be only a nominal one ; but never-ending hell will be the hard lot of all the rest of mankind. Islam on the other hand, holds that salvation can be

may be long (v. 82) and only he who has purity of faith and action can attain to salvation (v. 83). After setting forth the attitude of the Israelites of the Holy Prophet's days towards their own scriptures and the causes leading thereto, the Holy Qur-an dwells upon their actions, and first of all considers the vices of the Israelites of that time in general (v. 84).

EXPLANATORY NOTES—*continued.*

attained by combining faith with good actions. Thus, whoever has correct and right convictions and does good deeds that lead to a true and real relationship with God and sincere affinity with men secures salvation. If the adherents of any religion fail to comply with these necessary requirements, they cannot claim salvation, and their connection with any particular creed, caste, or community will not be of any avail to them. According to Islam, mere enrolment of name in the category of believers will not suffice for salvation purposes; the purity of belief coupled with the purity of action is the one thing needful. If the follower of a true faith falls short of the standard of a right faith and consequently lacks good deeds, he need not harbour any hope for an undue concession any more than a follower of a false faith, with comparatively better deeds, need fear everlasting damnation. Both will meet with punishment in proportion to the gravity of their respective sins, no chance of considering extenuating circumstances being denied to either of them. In short, Islam establishes even-handed justice as a necessary factor in the allotment of salvation and does not make it depend upon any verbal profession or blood relationship.

2. This verse does not refer to any particular covenant, but to the vices which were rife among the Jews at that time and which were forbidden them in the Bible. Worship of any object other than God is repeatedly forbidden in the Jewish scriptures. Even the Decalogue clearly prohibits it, as we read in Exodus XX, 3-6: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments." Again kindness towards the parents is also among the injunctions, as we read in Exodus XX, 12. "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Similarly, for the kind treatment of kinsmen we have the clear Biblical word: "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt not in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge; nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," (Lev. XIX, 17 & 18). Again, "And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters" (Ex. XXI, 9). "Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy neighbour, 'Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee.'" (Prov. III, 27 & 28). For attention to the orphans, a clear injunction is to be met with in Deut. XIV, 29:—"And the fatherless.....shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest."

For sympathy with the poor, one finds in Deut. XV, 11:—"For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land."

The injunction to deal gently by mankind is found in Proverbs, III, 30:—"Strive not with a man without cause, if he have done thee no harm."

The injunction to observe prayers is given in Deut. VI, 13:—"Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by His name."

The injunction for alms-giving may be seen in Ex. XXIII, 10 & 11. "And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: but the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave, the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard."

In spite of all these clear injunctions, the Jews acted quite to the contrary and openly disregarded them. Their treatment of their own kinsmen and others was cruel. They set up equals to God, some believing in Ezra as the son of God, some taking the word of their divines as revelations and setting aside the dictates of the Holy Writ. Their attitude towards the orphans and the indigent was unsympathetic. They were quite devoid of fellow-feeling. They were lax in prayers and alms-giving. It should be noted that here too God has not condemned the whole nation, but has made exception of the righteous among them.

In this verse, as everywhere else in the Holy Qur-ān, the sequence of words follows the natural order of importance of the works mentioned. Faith in God and His worship is the first and foremost injunction, forming, as it does, the basic ground of all virtues and the common mission of all prophets. Next comes kindness to parents, who, to some extent, manifest in themselves divine attributes with respect to their progeny. Then follows kindness to kinsmen who take the place of parents in their absence. Next comes the injunction to have compassion on the orphans, who, on account of their minority, cannot provide their own needs. Next, mention is made of the poor, as distinct from the orphans, who, though needy, are old enough to ask for help or labour with their own hands. Last of all, sympathy with mankind in general is inculcated. In short, all these injunctions display a natural order. The worship of God is mentioned first. Then mention is made of mankind, who have been divided into two classes: (1) those who deserve good treatment as a right; (2) those to whom we show kindness only as an act of charity. The first class is mentioned first, because in their case there is a sort of obligation, a debt to be paid. Those who are to be treated kindly out of charity are mentioned afterwards, the degree of need in each case determining the sequence. Last of all, acts of obedience to God are mentioned; and out of them the most important ones pertaining to body and wealth are selected; and these are placed after

لَا تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَلَا تُخْرِجُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ
وَأَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ⁸⁵ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتُخْرِجُونَ
فَرِيقًا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ تَظَاهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ
وَلَنْ يَأْتُواكُمْ أُسْرَىٰ فَهُمْ وَهُمْ مَحْرَمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ أَخْرِجْهُمْ أَوْ فَتِنْهُمْ

lā tasfikuna dimā'a-kum wa lā tukhrijuna anfusa-kum min diyāri-kum thumma aqrar-tum wa antum tashhadūn. 86. *Thumma antum hā'ulā'i taqtuluna anfusa-kum wa tukhrijuna farīqam-minkum-min-diyāri-him, tazāharūna 'alai-him bil iṭhmi wal-'udwun; wa in-yū'tu-kum usarā tufādū-hum wa huwa muḥarramun 'alaikum ikhrāju-hum, a-fa-tu'minūna*

85. And (remember) when We took from you the covenant that "ye shall not shed your blood, or turn yourselves out of your homes; then ye confirmed it and ye were witnesses thereto¹

fellow-feeling, because fellow-feeling is the first step in the moral elevation of man, who often feels impelled to it from within without reference to any law. The performance of the details of devotions is the second step in that direction, and only he who takes the first step will be able to take the second one.

1. In this verse, two more sins of the Jews are mentioned, *i.e.*, murder of their brethren and ejection of their kinsmen from their homes. These two sins were also current among them.

In this verse "your blood" means "the blood of your brethren." This expression is adopted to bring out the fact that the assassination of some of the members affects the whole community collectively as well as individually. Students of history will find in these words a deep secret of the rise and fall of nations; and statesmen will find in this Quranic injunction a sure guide to national prosperity.

Similarly, "(Ye shall not) turn yourselves out of your homes" means "(Ye shall not) turn your brethren out of their homes." This injunction is also broad-based on the same principle. The verse

signifies that the Israelites were forbidden to assassinate (Ex. XX, 13) and fight one another (fighting necessitates going out of homes, hence the use of the expression of ejection from homes), but they violated these commandments, as pointed out in the next verse.

It may be noted here that this verse begins with the words:—"And (remember) when we took from you the covenant," but the previous one commences with the words:—"And (remember) when we took from the children of Israel the covenant," although both the covenants relate to the Israelites. How can this difference in words be accounted for? The answer is to be found in the fact that it is one of the standing excellences of the Holy Qur-ān—and an eloquent testimony to its unique character—to express a wonderful depth of meaning by a slight change of words. Thus, what could otherwise be expressed in long sentences is clearly expressed in single words. By replacing the words 'the children of Israel' by 'you,' in the second verse, the Holy Qur-ān invites attention to the fact that the vices mentioned in the first verse were rife among the Israelites in general and those spoken of in the second verse were current among the Israelite tribes of Arabia alone.

and then of the Jews of Arabia in particular (vv. 85 and 86). Their actions clearly indicate that they

بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ
 الْآخِزِي فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَى أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ
 وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ۝⁸⁶ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُا الْحَيَاةَ

ni ba'dil-kitābi wa takfurūna bi ba'd, fa-mū jazā'u-man-yaf'alu dhālika min-kum illū khizyun il-hayātīd-dunyā, wa yaumal-qiyāmati yuradduna ilā ashaddil-'adhāb, wa mallāhu bi ghāfilin ammā ta'malūn. 87. *Ulā'ikal-ladhī-nashtarawul-hayā-*

86. Yet, ye are the very people who slay your men and turn a section of your people out of their homes, backing up one another against them with sin and injustice. And if they come to you as captives, ye ransom them, while their very expulsion was unlawful for you. Do ye, then, believe in part of the book and deny a part? "There is no reward, therefore, for him who does this among you, save disgrace in the life on earth; and on the Day of Judgment such shall be driven to a very severe chastisement; and verily Allāh is not indifferent to what ye do."

1. In this verse, it is pointed out that, in the face of clear injunctions to the contrary, the Jews had been killing one another and turning one another out of their homes. The Arab history tells us that there were living in Medina three Jewish, and two pagan Arab tribes, the former being Banū Qainuqah, Banu Nazir and Banū Quraidah, and the latter, Aus and Khazraj. The Jewish tribes, Banū Qainuqah and Banū Quraidah, sided with Aus, and Banū Nazir with Khazraj. Thus, whenever these pagan clans were at war with each other, the Jewish tribes were also involved in it. So, the latter also fought against each other and drove one another out of their homes. But after the war, if some Jews were taken prisoners by the pagans, they used to collect money by subscription and ransom them, because they considered it improper for a Jew to remain in bondage with a Gentile. The Holy Qur-ān objects to this course by saying that their faith not only forbids the enslavement of the Jews, but also prohibits mutual warfare and murder in which they openly indulge, and there could be no worse wickedness than to accept a portion of the scriptures and reject the rest; for one who accepts a portion of the scriptures is convinced of its truth, and his rejection of a portion is a clear evidence of a perverted mind. Many passages of the Bible bear out the above statement about the exemption of the Israelites from enslavement: In Lev. XXV,

39-43, we read:—"And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond servant: But as a hired servant, and as a sojourner he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of Jubilee: and then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return. For they are My servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt. They shall not be sold as bondsmen. Thou shalt not rule over them with rigour; but shalt fear thy God." An Israelite slave, according to the Bible, may, in the first place, be redeemed, he himself, as well as his relatives, being allowed to obtain his freedom (Lev., XXV, 47-49). But if they fail to obtain his redemption, he is sure to be set free on the occasion of the Jubilee which comes off every seventh year (*vide* Lev., XXV, 54 & 55). What conclusion the Jews drew from these injunctions and how they understood them can be easily judged from the practice of the Prophet Nehemiah, who manumitted all the Israelite slaves: those with him as well as those with others (Nehemiah V, 8). In the Talmudic period, the Jews came to agree to the fact that no member of their nation could be enslaved. To this effect we read in the Encyclopaedia Biblica:—"This fundamental principle—that no Jew can ever be a slave—was taken over by the later

Ch. 10.

ع
P. 10.

الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ ۚ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ۝
وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ ۚ وَآتَيْنَا
عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ۖ أَفَكُلَّمَا
جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَى أَنْفُسُكُمْ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ ۖ فَفَرِّقَا كَذِّبْتُمْ
وَفَرِّقَا تَقْتُلُونَ ۝⁸⁸ وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ ۚ بَلْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ

tad-dunyā bil-ākhirati, fa-lā yukhaffafu 'an-humul-'adhābu wa lā hum yunṣarūn.

R. 11

88. *Wa la-qad ātainā Mūsā-kitāba wa qaffainā mim-ba'di-hi bir-rusuli, wa ātainā 'Isābn Maryamal-bayyināti wa ayyadnā-hu bi-Rūhil-quḍus; afa kullamā jā'akum rasūlum-bi-mā-lā tahw anfusū-kumus-takbar-tum, fa-farīqan kadhdhabtum, wa farīqan taqtulūn.*

89. *Wa qālū qulūbu-nā ghulf; bal-la'ana-humullāhu bi-kufri-him*

87. These are they who have purchased the present life for that to come Punishment from them shall not, therefore, be lightened, nor shall they be helped.¹

R. 11

88. And verily ^a to Moses gave We the Book and ^b We caused prophets* to follow him, and ^c to Jesus, son of Mary, gave We signs and aided him with the Holy Spirit Will ye, then, ^d every time a Messenger comes to you with what your souls desire not behave insolently and ^e treat some as liars and slay others?²

* *Lit.* those sent (by God).

Talmudic law; even the thief, who had been sold for his crime, was not to be regarded as a slave and when the manifold wars of Seleucids and the Ptolemies again and again reduced multitudes of Jews to slavery under heathen masters, their redemption was regarded as a sacred duty and a meritorious service" (Enc. Bib., Vol. IV, Col. 4657). In short, the above references go to prove that, in accordance with the Biblical injunctions, the enslavement of

Jews was not looked upon as commendable, and that if, by chance, some Jew was made a captive, there were commandments for his emancipation. In compliance with this behest, the Jews of Medina used to have Jewish slaves redeemed, but this was absurd on their part, because they themselves created the circumstances which led to the enslavement of their fellows.

have not preferred religion to worldly affairs, but have, on the contrary, thrown the former into the background for the sake of worldly gains and have thus rendered themselves unworthy of any reward and help from God (v. 87). Again the Israelites are addressed to the effect that they had opposed all the prophets from Moses to Jesus for no other reason than that some of their teachings were at variance with their desires and wishes. They shared with their forefathers the guilt of opposing and persecuting the prophets, because, although belonging to a later time, they accorded to the prophets' scriptures the same treatment as their ancestors had done to the prophets—acting upon the commandment they liked and setting aside those they disliked. If they had also been present in the times of those prophets, the latter would have fared no better at their hands (v. 88). Thereafter a common saying of the Jews is quoted. Whenever

EXPLANATORY NOTES—continued.

1. As the Jews had abandoned religion and become worldly, it was only natural that in order to teach them a lesson, temporal power should have been taken away from them, and the punishment should not have ceased until they reverted to the religion of God.

2. *Explanation of important words:*—The word قفينا (*qaffainā*) used in this verse, means "We made them follow" (*vide* Lisān-ul-'Arab, Vol. XX, p. 55). This does not only signify that Moses was followed by a succession of prophets, but that they were also the followers of Moses and trod the same path as was indicated by him. The word بينات (*bayyināt*) means such signs and arguments as establish the truth of a claimant (*vide* Mufridāt-i-Raghib, p. 68). By the word روح القدس (*Ruhul Qudus*) is meant 'the holy or blessed word of God' or 'the angel of holiness and blessing.' (*vide* Lisān-ul-'Arab, Vol. III, p. 51).

Explanation of the verse. Not only the opponents but also some of the followers of the Holy Qur-ān have failed to understand why, while speaking generally of the prophets who came after Moses, separate mention is made of Christ. Christian missionaries, who often hunt up handles for attacking Islam and read the Holy Qur-ān with the settled object of discovering in it something in support of their own pet theories, would have us believe that the particular mention of Christ in the Holy Qur-ān is meant for his exaltation over all other prophets, and that the mention of signs and the Holy Spirit in connection with him is intended to show that he surpasses all the other prophets in rank and position. The present day Muslims, again, put quite an unwarrantable interpretation upon this verse. They hold that the separate mention of Christ in this verse is meant to prove that he was a Law-giver. They take 'the signs' to mean the much exaggerated miracles of Jesus, and the aid of the Holy Spirit the constant company of Gabriel or the revelation of Gospel as a new Law. There is no doubt that the Muslims of to-day are in error in including Jesus among the law-giving prophets. Such a belief is not supported by historical evidence and has arisen out of a lack of insight into the true meaning of this verse. The true reason why the Holy Qur-ān speaks of Jesus apart from other prophets of the Mosaic dispensation has to be sought in the fact that the Jews, in some way or other, accepted all those prophets who appeared prior to Jesus Christ, but stubbornly declined to accept the claims of Jesus. No other prophet met with such opposition at their hands as Jesus Christ. We find that Solomon and Daniel did not hold any very high place in the estimation of the Jews, but still their books form, to this day, an integral part of the Jewish scriptures. In the same way, Zechariah and John, though placed by the Jews outside the circle of the prophets, are looked upon by them as men of learning and piety. Thus, the Jews honour all the prophets, although some are considered by them as only learned and godly personages. But about Jesus Christ they hold revolting views, and hurling abominable imputations against

his holy self, call him (God forbid!) an accursed impostor. It was therefore in the fitness of things that, while mentioning in general terms the maltreatment of the prophets by the Jews, particular mention should have been made of Jesus to whom the Jews accorded the worst treatment, and about whom they continued to hold the same abhorrent notion till the time of the revelation of the Holy Qur-ān. By making special mention of Jesus the Holy Qur-ān protests against the alleged accusations against Jesus Christ and declares that he was as holy a prophet as so many others in whom the Jews had believed, inasmuch as he possessed, in common with them, those characteristics that distinguished them from other men of the world. There was, therefore, no reason why Christ should be rejected, while so many others were accepted. The most powerful proofs of the truth of the claims of Jesus as a prophet were his being favoured with signs and the assistance of the Holy Spirit—these two being the indispensable factors of the prophetic office. The Holy Qur-ān clearly states that Jesus was not the sole possessor of heavenly signs, but that such signs were given to all other prophets. For instance, we read of Moses:—

ولقد جاءكم موسى بالبينت (البقرة)

"Verily Moses came to you with signs" (II, 93). Similarly, in the verse quoted below, the Holy Qur-ān points out that signs were granted to all the prophets:—

ذلك بانهم كانت تأتيهم رسلهم بالبينت فدفعوا فآخذهم الله ط إنه قوى شديد العقاب (المومن)

i.e., The cause of the ruin of the people who preceded the Holy Prophet was that from time to time the prophets came to them with signs, but they refused to believe in them, so the wrath of God fell upon them, God being All-powerful and the Ready Punisher of certain evils (XL, 23). This verse clearly shows that all the prophets came with signs. So, in the verse under discussion mention of "signs," with which Jesus was favoured, does not show, as many erroneously suppose, any exclusive distinction of Jesus, but only shows that Jesus should not be excluded from the class of prophets, as the Jews had done, because, like all other prophets, he too came with signs.

Likewise, the mention of the *Ruhul-Qudus* (lit 'the Holy word of God' or 'the angel of holiness') shows that, as alleged by the Jews, Jesus had no connection with evil spirits, but was, like all other prophets, assisted by angels of God and was consequently the recipient of divine revelation, one of the most essential characteristics of a true prophet. It does by no means suggest that Jesus enjoys, in this respect, any superiority over other prophets or that he was a Law-giver. Taking the term *Ruhul-Qudus* to mean "the angel of holiness," the verse merely states that God deputed His angels, especially Gabriel, to help Jesus, by bringing to him divine revelations. And this is not the special privilege of Jesus, for all other prophets received divine revelations through the Holy Spirit. We read in the Holy

فَقَلِيلًا مَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝ وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ
 لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۖ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ
 مَا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ ۖ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ۝ بِئْسَمَا اشْتَرَوْا بِهِ

fa qalīlam-mā yu'minūn.

90. *Wa lammā jā'a-hum kitābum min 'indillāhi muṣaddiqul limā ma'a-hum, wa kūnū min qablu yastaftihūna 'alalladhīna kafarū, fa-lammā jā'a-hum mā 'arafu kafarū bihī, fa la'natullāhi 'alal kāfirīn*

91. *Bī'sa mashtarau bi hī*

89. And they said, "Our minds are devoid of understanding," Nay, Allāh ^b has cursed them for their disbelief, so they believe but little.¹

90. And when a Book came down to them from Allāh, 'verifying that which is with them, though they had before ^a prayed for victory over those who believed not, yet 'when that came to them which they knew, they disbelieved it. The curse of Allāh be, then, on the disbelievers.²

Qur-ān about the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God):—

قل نزله روح القدس من ربك بالحق ليثبت الذين آمنوا وهدى وبشورى للمسلمين (نحل)

i.e., "Say; the Holy Spirit (Gabriel) hath brought it down with truth from thy Lord, that He may establish those who have believed, and as a guidance and glad tidings to the Muslims" (Rodwell) XVI, 103 This verse shows that it was the *Rūḥul-Qudus* (Holy Spirit) that brought the revelations of the Holy Qur-ān to the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God). The Holy Qur-ān further indicates that the divine spirit descends not only on the prophets but also on the true believers, as the following verse clearly shows:—

اولئك كتب في قلوبهم الايمان و ايدهم بروح منه (مجادله)
 "He has written faith in their hearts, and He aids them with a spirit from Him" (Palmer) LVIII, 23.

In addition to the convincing testimony of the Holy Qur-ān. we have also the evidence of the Holy Prophet to the same effect. He is reported to have said to Hassān, the poet:—

اجب عن رسول الله اللهم ايدده بروح القدس

"Reply (to the unbelievers) on behalf of the Prophet of God," and then added: "O God help him with the Holy Spirit." On another occasion, the Holy Prophet said to Hassān:—

هاجهم و جبريل معك

"Censure them in verse, and Gabriel is with thee." From these traditions it is clear that the Holy Spirit may descend on others than prophets.

1. اُغْلَفَ (*Ghulḥf*) is the plural of اُغْلَفَ (*aghlaḥ*) which means "devoid of understanding." Whenever the Jews found themselves unable to refute Quranic arguments, they said that they were of obtuse understanding, too dull to comprehend those things. These words could bear a duality of meanings. *First*, that they were men of poor intelligence and unable to grasp Islamic doctrines and that the Muslims should, therefore, go to their learned men and explain their tenets to them. *Secondly*, by saying that they were not intelligent enough to grasp the Islamic teachings, they meant to insinuate that, when, with all their superior wisdom and high intellect, they were unable to understand them, their futility was self-evident.

arguments are presented to them and the truth is brought home to them, they, instead of thinking over the facts, put off the matter, saying that they were too dull to comprehend such things. But the Holy Qur-ān declares that their extreme indifference to religion is in itself a sufficient testimony to their having fallen under the wrath of God (v. 89). Accordingly, although prior to the days of the Holy Prophet they had been reciting to the pagans the prophecies regarding the promised Prophet and themselves wished to find him and see their ascendancy over the unbelievers through him, yet they rejected him when he appeared with clear unmistakable signs (v. 90). Their rejection was based on no

أَنْفُسَهُمْ أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بَغْيًا أَنْ يَنْزِلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
 عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ فَبَاءٌ وَرِعَضٌ عَلَى غَضَبٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ
 عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ۝⁹¹ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا تَأْتُونَنَا

anfusa hum an-yakfurū bi mā anza-lal-lāhu baghyān an-yunazzilal-lāhu min faḍli-hi 'alā man-yashā'u min 'ibādihī, fa bā'ū bi ghaḍabin 'alā ghaḍab; wa lil-kāfirina 'adhabum-muhin.

92. *Wa idhū qila la hum ūminu bi mā anzalal-lāhu qālū nu'minu*

91. Vile is that for which they have sold their souls, that they should disbelieve in what Allāh has revealed, envying because Allāh sends down His grace on whomsoever of His servants He pleases; so they brought down on themselves wrath upon wrath; and for the disbelievers is an humiliating chastisement¹

Whatever was the motive of the Jews in saying these words, the Holy Qur-ān says that the Islamic doctrines are quite consistent with reason and not at all difficult to grasp, but their failure to understand them is the result of their evil deeds, which have estranged them from God.

2. The word *يَسْتَفْتِيهِنَا* *yastafīhūna* bears two meanings: (1) "they disclose," and (2) "they ask for victory." According to the former meaning, the verse would signify that the Jews used to disclose to the pagan Arabs the fact that there was foretold in their scriptures the appearance of a Prophet who would spread the truth all over the world. But when that Prophet appeared, even those of them who had seen the signs of God turned away from him, the result being that they fell into the displeasure of God. Taking the second meaning of the word, the verse would signify that before the advent of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God), the Jews used to pray fervently to God to raise a Prophet who would cause the true faith to triumph over the false ones (*vide Ibn-i-Hishām, Vol. I., p. 150*). But, curiously enough, when the Prophet came in accordance with their wishes and the ascendancy of truth over falsehood became manifest, they refused to accept him. In fact, when we see that the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) implanted in the minds of his followers profound respect for Moses and other Israelite prophets with the result that those who were formerly looking upon the Israelite prophets as impostors came to believe in

them as the righteous servants of God, we are struck with wonder why the Jews outdid in their antagonism to the Holy Prophet even the pagan Arabs whose idolatrous faith he sought to extirpate.

1. The word *اشْتَرَاء* *ishtirā'* is used to signify "buying" as well as "selling." Here the latter meaning suits the context. The verse means that the Jews, upon whom truth has dawned and who have come to recognise the Holy Qur-ān as the very book mentioned in their scriptures, are, out of sheer pride and obstinacy, impiously rejecting it, little knowing that, by so doing, they are hastening the ruin of their own souls. Instead of realising the dire consequences of their action, they delight in their disbelief and gloat over their misdeeds. The truth is that these men cannot bear to see a prophet raised from among any people other than their own. They fail to realise that all men alike are the creatures of God and there is no earthly reason why every prophet should appear among the Israelites, to the exclusion of all other peoples, and why God should not choose any other righteous servant of His for His favours. As in this verse, so in many other verses, the Holy Qur-ān has emphatically refuted the notion of a tribal God. The God of the Holy Qur-ān is the God of all mankind, so that He is not partial to any one nationality. On the other hand, anybody, irrespective of caste or colour, can make himself eligible for His favours by virtue of true faith and righteous deeds, which together draw His grace nigh.

other reason than that he belonged to a different nationality. This showed that they wished to dictate terms to God for the distribution of His grace (v. 91). Whenever Islam was presented to them, far from reflecting over its claims,

بِمَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرُونَ بِمَا وَرَاءَهُ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا
 مَعَهُمْ قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْبِيَاءَ اللَّهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ⁹²

bi mā unzila 'alainū wa yakfuruna bi mā warā' a-hū, wa huwal-ḥaqqu muṣaddiqal-li mā ma'a-hum. qul fa lima taqtuluna ambiyā 'allāhi min qablu in kuntum-mu'minin.

92. And when it is said to them 'Believe in what Allāh has sent down,' they say, 'We believe in what has been sent down to us;' and they disbelieve in what is besides it; yet "it is the truth, verifying that which is with them. Say: Wherefore did ye, then, attempt to slay the prophets of Allāh before this, if ye were believers?"

1. When the people spoken of in this verse were asked to believe in what God had sent to the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him), they used to reply that they would believe in nothing but what had been sent to them through their own prophets. They failed to understand that disbelief in the Holy Qur-ān reflected discredit on their own scriptures, because the latter contained prophecies about the advent of a prophet and about the revelation of a fresh book of law, and these prophecies were being fulfilled in the Holy Prophet and the Holy Qur-ān. Thus, refusal to believe in the Holy Prophet was synonymous with disbelief in the true tidings contained in the old scriptures. For, if it is supposed that the Holy Prophet was not true in his claims, there is no escape from the position that the conditions of the scriptural prophecies could also be found in impostors, or alternatively, that Satan could also, like God, reveal the secrets of the future, and he told the prophets of old such signs of the expected prophet as could be met with even in false prophets.

Some of the prophecies contained in the Bible about the advent of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) are detailed below:—

Deut. XVIII, 17-19:—

This prophecy was not fulfilled in any of the Israelite prophets, nor did any of them advance claims to have fulfilled it in his person. The only prophet who made such claims was the Holy Prophet of Islam, to whom alone, therefore, the prophecy could be applied. In the Holy Qur-ān we read:—

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا شَاهِدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَى
 فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُولًا (المزمل)

i.e., "This prophet is like Moses" (LXXIII, 16). Similarly has the Holy Qur-ān elsewhere referred to this prophecy thus:—

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُوا أَمْرِي وَلَا تَعْصُوا أَمْرًا مِنْكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مِمَّا قَالُوا لَعَنَ اللَّهُ الْفَاسِقِينَ (الحقاف)

i.e., "O people (who do not like to ponder over the Holy Qur-ān)! say (what will be the consequence) if this book, which you have rejected thoughtlessly is from God. And a man (Moses) out of the Israelites has borne witness to one like himself. So he (Moses) believed in him while ye manifest only pride. Bear in mind, God never prospers the transgressors" (XLVI, 11). There are some who attempt to apply this prophecy to Jesus; but besides the absence of any claim on the part of Jesus to be the like of Moses, it is clearly mentioned in the New Testament that the like of Moses will appear *after* the advent of the first Messiah and *before* that of the second one. (Vide Acts III, 19-26).

Furthermore, in Deut. XXXIII, 2, there is a promise that "the Lord" shall "shine forth from Mount Paran and He will come with ten thousands of saints" and "from His right hand shall go a fiery law for them." The prophet who appeared on Paran with ten thousand holy persons was no other than the Holy Prophet of Arabia. At the time of the conquest of Mecca, ten thousand men followed at his heels. Nor has any other prophet after Moses made claims to have received a fresh code of Law.

For similar prophecies see also Matt. XXI 42-44; Isaiah VIII, 14-17; IX, 6-7; XXI, 13-17

they considered it enough to say that they would believe in what was sent to the Israelite prophets only, and not in the revelation of an outsider, although the revelation which they rejected for such crude reasons was fulfilling the prophecies contained in their own scriptures about a new book. Then again the statement that they would adhere to what was revealed to Israelite prophets was quite absurd, seeing that they had opposed those prophets too in their time (v. 92).

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِن بَعْدِهِ
وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ⁹³ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ
خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاسْمَعُوا قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَشْرَبُوا
فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ قُلْ بِئْسَمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِهِ إِيمَانُكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ⁹⁴ قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ

93. *Wa la qad jā'a kum Musā bil-bayyināti thum-matta-khadh-tumul-'ijla mim-ba'di-hi wa antum ḡālimūn.*

94. *Wa idh akhadhnū mīthāqa kum wa raf'a nū fauqa-kumuṭ-Ṭūr; khudhu mā ātainā kum bi quwwatīn-was-mā'u; qālu samī'nā wa 'aṣainā, wa ushribu fī qulubī himuṭ-'ijla bi kufri him; qul bi'sa mā ya'muru kum bi hī imānu kum in kuntum mu'minīn.* 95. *Qul in kūnat la kumud-dāruṭ-ākhiratu 'indal-*

93. And verily Moses came to you with signs, then "ye made the calf in his absence, and ye were transgressors.

94. And when We accepted your covenant and "raised over you *Ṭūr*, 'Take fast hold of what We have given you and hearken'; they said ' 'We have hearkened and we have disobeyed' ' ; and they were made to imbibe in their hearts the love of the calf,² because of their disbelief. Say, ' Vile is that which your faith bids you do, if ye be believers ' .³

XXVIII, 9-13; XXXV, 3-8; XL, 9-12; XLII, XLIX, 5-8; LXII, 2-4; Daniel VII and so on.

In the last sentence of this verse the notion of the Jews, that they should believe only in what had been sent to them through their own prophets, has been rebutted. If, as they say, they believed in what was revealed to their own prophets, why did they at all oppose the previous prophets? The truth is that they are not sincere in their declaration that they are ready to believe in what may be re-

vealed to an Israelite prophet. Therefore, if they have rejected the Prophet of Islam, that is not at all due to the above cause, but it is really the result of their wilful refusal to accept the truth, even after it has dawned on them.

1. قالوا سمعنا وعصينا (They said, We have hearkened and we have disobeyed) signifies that they practically refused to obey God. قال (*qāla*), as pointed out in Note 1 p. 30, sometimes conveys the sense not of *speech* but of *conduct*.

They had even opposed Moses, to say nothing of other prophets (v. 93), and that, at a time when they had given a solemn promise at the foot of Sinai not to worship anything besides God. In spite of that promise they showed their opposition to the commandments of God, by their deeds (v. 94).

اللَّهُ خَالِصَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُا الْمَوْتَ إِن كُنْتُمْ
صَادِقِينَ⁹⁵ وَلَنْ يَتَمَنَّوَهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
بِالظَّالِمِينَ⁹⁶ وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَى حَيَاتِهِمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ

lāhi khālīṣatam-min dūnin-nāsi fa tamanna-wul-mawta in kuntum ṣādiqīn.

251CV 96. *Wa laṇ yatamannau-hu abadam-bimū qaddamat aidi him ; wallāhu 'a'īmum-biḡ-zālimīn.*

97. *Wa la tajidanna hum aḡraṣan-nāsi 'alā ḡayūh, wa minal-ladhīna*

95. Say, "If the future abode with Allāh is solely for you to the exclusion of other men, then wish for death, if ye say truth."

96. But ^b never shall they wish for it, because of what their hands have sent on before; and Allāh well knows the unjust.¹

2. *Lil.* "The calf was assimilated in their minds"; idiomatically, "the love of the calf had sunk deep into their hearts."

3. In this verse it is pointed out that the Jews professed to believe in what was revealed to the Israelites, but certainly their belief was of a strange character; because, in spite of their so-called belief, they persisted in their opposition to the prophets. If such was what they called faith, then their faith was leading them astray; for opposition to the prophets, whether by words or actions, did not bear good fruit.

1. (vv. 95, 96). In these verses the Jews are invited to join with the Muslims in praying to God for a decision between them. In other words, if, as they assert, they are in the right and they have the sole monopoly of God's favours in the life to come, they should hold a prayer-contest with the

Muslims, entreating God to ruin the party with which He is displeased on account of its espousing the cause of falsehood. If the Jews are really the favourites of God and the Muslims are under His wrath, the latter will surely, as a result of the prayer-contest, meet with ruin, to the delight and glory of the Jews, and thus people at large will be in a position to see which of the two parties is on the side of truth. The only evidence which in this world can possibly prove the truth of any of the conflicting claims regarding the next life made by the different religious systems, is that the promises held out for the next life should, in part, at least, show a beginning of fulfilment in this very life. If, in such a contest as the above, God will show His favour to the Jews, it will furnish a proof that His favours will accompany them also in the next life.

It should be noted that, after inviting the Jews to the prayer-contest, the Holy Qur-ān adds that,

In short, it was quite wrong to assume that these people did not believe in the revelation of the Holy Prophet because he was not an Israelite. But the real cause, as already stated, was that they had conceived the notion that they had monopolised the rewards of the next world, that they had been exempted from all restrictions on account of their being descended from Israel, and that they would not be called to account for any transgression of theirs. This very fact led to their remissness in faith and actions just as it had led them to play with their scriptures. But they were quite mistaken in holding that their Jewish descent would save them. If not so, let them seek decision between themselves and the Muslims by supplicating God to help the party that was in the right and to curse and punish those who followed falsehood. It would then be seen whether the divine decision would declare for or against the people who regarded themselves as the chosen people of God and thus boldly indulged in every kind of sin (v. 95). But the Holy Qur-ān points out that although these people thought salvation to be their exclusive prerogative and paradise their birth-right and not the reward for true faith and righteous deeds, yet they could not have the courage to accept the proposed mode of praying for divine decision, because this notion of theirs was based on mere fancy and not on reason or scriptural evidence. Conscious of the fact that their deeds deserved punishment, they feared the consequences in the event of their notion turning out to be wrong (v. 96). Consequently, they longed for the life of this world even more than

أَشْرَكُوا يَوْمَئِذٍ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمِنَ حِجَاهِ

مِنَ الْعَذَابِ أَنْ يُعَمَّرَ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝⁹⁷ قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ

عَدُوًّا لِلْجَبْرِيلِ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا

بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝⁹⁸ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِلَّهِ

Ch. 1

ع

R. 1

ashrakū, yawwaddu ahadu hum lau yu'ammuru alfa sanah, wa mā huwa bi muṣaḥṣiḥi-hi minal-'adhābi an yu'ammur; wallāhu baṣīrum-bi mā ya'malūn.

R. 12.

98. *Qul man kāna 'aduwwal-lī Jibrīla fa-inna-hu nazzala-hū 'alā qalbi-ka bi idhnillāhi muṣad-diqal-limā baina yadai-hi wa hudaḥ-wa bushrā lil mu'minīn.* 99. *Man kāna 'aduwwal-lillāhi-*

97. And thou shalt surely find them of all men the most covetous of life, even more than those who associate gods with Allāh. Every one of them wishes if he were kept alive a thousand years, but his being so kept alive shall in no wise remove him from the punishment; and Allāh sees what they do.¹

R. 12.

98. Say, Whoso is an enemy to Gabriel—for verily "he has caused it to descend on thy heart by the command of Allāh, verifying that which preceded it, and ^b a guidance and glad tidings to the faithful—²

although repeatedly invited, the Jews will never venture to accept the challenge, because they are well aware of their actions and the motives that guide them.

The Rev. Dr. Wherry writes in his Commentary on the Holy Qur-ān that the objection can equally be raised against the Muslims, who also, like the Jews, seem to have monopolised salvation. But his objection is unwarrantable. For the Holy Qur-ān points out two claims as made by the Jews; *first*, that they will assuredly obtain salvation; and, *secondly*, that God has promised them such salvation, to the exclusion of all other peoples who will be cast into eternal hell-fire. The Muslims make no such claims: they neither hold that all Muslims without any exception will obtain salvation, nor do they regard other people as inferior to themselves

and less deserving of God's favours; and so, they keep the doors open to all mankind, and believe that whoever accepts the truths which God has revealed to His servants and lives up to the standard of life fixed by God for His creatures becomes deserving of salvation.

1. The reason why the Jews were more attached to the world than the pagans is that the pagans did not believe in any retribution after death and, therefore, though they loved the world as the only place for enjoying honour and happiness and entertained no hope about the next world, yet having no fear of punishment after death, they were less cringingly attached to life than the Jews, who believed in resurrection after death and feared in their heart that their actions would make them liable to punishment.

those who were setting up equals to God, little knowing that longevity could not save them from punishment, and that death and subsequent retribution were inevitable, howsoever long the life might be. Thus this desire for long life was unavailing, the real remedy being self-lamentment which was quite absent from their minds (v. 97).

After this, it is impressed upon the Jews that enmity with this revelation was, in fact, enmity with the bearer of it; but as he was acting at the bidding of God and not of his own accord, so enmity with him meant enmity with God

EXPLANATORY NOTES—continued.

2. The word جبرائيل (*Gabriel*) is a compound of *geber* (גבר) meaning in Hebrew, a servant, and *el* (אל) meaning 'God.' Thus جبرائيل (*Gabriel*) means 'the servant of God.' In Arabic, which is the mother of Hebrew, جبر (*jabar*) means 'to press, force, or compel', and also 'to mend what is broken'; and thus the word is applied to kings, good men and heroes, because they control people. An Arab poet says:—

وانعم صباحا ايها الجبر -

i.e., "May your morning be good, O good and brave man!" But the word ايل (*el*) does not exist in this form in the Arabic language, and if ever used, it is borrowed from the Hebrew tongue. A closer research of the Arabic language, however, discloses the fact that there is a word ائل *ā'il* in the Arabic language which is akin to the Hebrew world (*el*). ائل (*ā'il*) is really the active participle formed from the verb آل (*āla*), 'he controlled.' The Arab says آل الرعية, *ālar-ra'iyata*, when he means to say, "he managed the political and other affairs of the subject people;" and he says آل علي القوم, *āla 'alal qaum*, when he wants to convey "he became a ruler over the nation." Hence ائل (*ā'il*) means "a statesman, an administrator or a ruler." Again, the word آل (*āla*) also means "returned," hence ائل may mean 'one who returns repeatedly.' Accordingly, جبرائيل (*jibrā'il*), has any of the following three meanings: (1) A good and brave servant of a ruler. (2) A good and brave servant of an administrator. (3) A good and brave servant of one who returns repeatedly (to men with mercy).

The word *el* in Hebrew bears a meaning quite similar to that of Arabic word ائل (*ā'il*) because the real meaning of Hebrew (*el*), according to some scholars, is "to be mighty" (Ency. Bib., Vol. III, Col. 3326), which is much the same as 'ruler,' or 'administrator.' Some scholars hold that ايل (*el*) means "one who is the goal of all human aspiration and endeavour." This meaning corresponds to the other sense of ائل (*ā'il*) which means the 'returner.' It is a case of mutation of meaning. For example the Hebrew word Elohim, which originally meant "to be strong" has come to mean "the strong one;" so also in Hebrew, ائل (*ā'il*), having lost the primary meaning of 'one who returns' might have come to acquire the sense of "the object to which one returns." But the more reasonable view appears to be that the word retains its primary significance and does not mean 'the goal or the place to which return is sought'; but it rather means 'the returner,' *i.e.*, God who returns to man with His grace on his repentance. In short جبرائيل (*Gabriel*) means 'a good and brave servant of the Acceptor of repentance,' and is the name given to one of the angels of God whose business, as we learn from the Bible, was to convey the messages of God to His servants. This is clear from Dan. VIII, 16;

IX, 21; and Luke I, 19, 26, where Gabriel is mentioned by name. The Holy Qur-an also assigns the same function to Gabriel, as shown by the verse under discussion. But in some later writings of the Jews quite a different function is assigned to him for he is described as 'the angel of fire and thunder.' This is clear from the later Targums. Islamic books on history show that this idea had such a firm hold on the minds of the Jews that when they were told that the bearer of the Qurani revelations was the angel, Gabriel, they said:—

جبرائيل ذاك الذي ينزل بالحرب والقتال والعذاب
عدونا -

i.e., "Gabriel is the angel who is associated with war and bloodshed and punishment. He is our enemy." By saying this they meant that they would not believe in a revelation brought by Gabriel. (*Vide* Musnad of Ahmad Hambal). The reason why the Jews bore enmity to Gabriel seems to be that they had fallen on evil days and as according to them, Gabriel was the angel of war fighting, and punishment, therefore they ascribed their misfortunes to him. There is no doubt that the Talmudic traditions and the Targums were the origin of this notion which gained such a firm footing among the Jews; for, as a matter of fact the Bible declares Gabriel as the angel of good tidings and of the divine word. It is evident that through length of time legends and myths grew round the original truth which was subsequently lost; and the Jews clung fast to their erroneous belief, which stood in their way of accepting the fresh revelation through the agency of Gabriel. The error of the writers of the Targums may be traced to the fact that the word '*geber*' conveys a bad sense also.

The Qur-ān has brought forward the following four arguments in refutation of the above Jewish plea for rejecting the Holy Qur-ān: *First*, no angel can bring down revelation unless he receives direct orders from God. Hence, the angel, whether he is Gabriel, Michael or any other, is only the vehicle of the divine word; and if somebody misled by traditional bias, does not think well of the angel, who is only the passive agent through whom the divine word is transmitted, there is no reason why he should question the authority from which it proceeds. The nature of the agency does not certainly alter the character of the message transmitted, nor does it lessen its authority. *Secondly*, if the revelations sent to the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God), all the prophecies about the promised Law-giver contained in the previous scriptures find their fulfilment. Hence they should not hesitate to accept such an auspicious revelation as manifests the truth of their own scriptures. *Thirdly*, in deciding upon the acceptance or rejection of a book, the point to be determined is whether the doctrines it inculcates are right or wrong. When it is demonstrated that the teachings of the Holy Qur-ān are noble and edifying, its acceptance becomes binding upon a right-thinking men. *Lastly*, it is added that th

وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ
لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ۝ وَلَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَا

wa mal'ikati-hi, wa rusuli-hi wa jibrila wa mikāla fa innallāha 'aduwwul-lil-kāfirin.

100. *Wa'la qad anzalnā ilaika āyātim-bayyināt, wa mā yakfuru bihā*

99. Whoso is "an enemy to Allāh, and His Angels, and His Messengers, and Gabriel, and Michael, then verily Allāh is an enemy to the disbelievers.¹

Holy Qur-ān contains teachings which, besides being right, are highly beneficial for man's spiritual and social life and bear glad tidings to its followers. In short, the attention of the Jews is directed to the fact that when the revelation of the Holy Qur-ān proceeds from God, fulfils the prophecies of their own scriptures, contains truth, and is highly useful to men, it is quite improper to reject it for no other reason than that it was brought down by Gabriel.

1. An angel is only a medium for the conveyance of the divine word, just as air is a medium for the conveyance of sounds to the ear. Angels are, so to speak, the bearers of the divine message. As an insult to a king's agent implies insult to the king himself, so those who speak unworthy things about any of the angels really find fault with God for choosing a defective instrument for the conveyance of His word. The Holy Qur-ān, therefore, declares that these words of the Jews imply irreverence to God and opposition to His will, such as only an enemy of God could show. It is evident that one who opposes the will of God sets himself against all the angels and the prophets, because they all are the servants of God. Thus, one who breaks even one link of the spiritual chain or manifests ill-will against any single unit of the spiritual system severs his connection with the whole system. And the result is that such a man deprives himself of the favours and blessings which are bestowed upon the

friends of God and renders himself deserving of the punishment fixed for the transgressors.

In this verse, a brief mention of God and the angels and the prophets generally is followed by a specific mention of Gabriel and Michael. The reason is not far to seek. The Jews regarded Gabriel as their foe. It was therefore particularly pointed out that enmity with Gabriel merited divine punishment. Again, a special mention of Michael was necessary because of the fact that the Jews took him for a special friend of theirs and considered him as the protecting angel or the prince of the Israelites. (*Vide Enc. Brit., Vol. XVIII, p. 352*). It was therefore possible that, as it is usual with thoughtless, excitable men, some inconsiderate Muslims might sometimes take to reviling Michael as a retort to the Jewish ill-will against Gabriel; and it was probable that these two angels should be set down as rivals to each other by each of the two communities choosing one of them as its protecting angel. To prevent the Muslims from falling into such an error, the name of Michael was also mentioned along with Gabriel's, so that no Muslim might take it into his head to retort Jewish envy against Gabriel by speaking ill of Michael.

Michael literally means "like God." The reason why he is so named seems to be that this angel is associated chiefly with the divine work of sustaining and cherishing the world. (*Vide Dan. X, 13, 21, XII, 1*).

Himself (v. 98); which amounted to enmity with all the agencies that contributed to the progress of man. So a note of warning is sounded against the delusive fancy that denial of the Holy Qur-an was an ordinary thing. The result would be that they would bring upon themselves the wrath of God, and thus they would be provoking war, not against men, but against that Creator of heaven and earth who had brought into being all the means of weal or woe (v. 99).

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إِلَّا الْفَاسِقُونَ ۝ أَوْ كَلِمَاتٍ عَهْدٌ وَأَعَهْدٌ أَنْبَدَهُ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ بَلْ
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أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝ وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ

illal-fāsiqūn. 101. *A-wa kullamā 'āhadū 'āhdan-nabadha-hū farīqum-min-hum; bal aktharu-hum*
lā yu'minūn 102. *Wa lammā jā'a-hum rasūlum-min 'indillāhi*

100. And surely We have sent down to thee manifest signs,¹ and none will disbelieve them but the rebellious.²

101. What! every time they make a covenant, will some of them repudiate it? Nay, most of them believe not.

1. **آيات بينات** (manifest signs) refers to all those signs which God showed to prove the truth of the Holy Prophet. The greatest of those signs is the matchlessness of the Holy Qur-ān. The Rev. Dr. Wherry's assertion that, according to the Holy Qur-ān, the Prophet of Islam worked no miracles simply betrays his ignorance. The verses which he has quoted in support of his assertion by no means warrant his conclusion. For instance, from verses 119 & 120 of this chapter he has attempted to infer that the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) showed no miracles, but these very verses give the lie to his assumption. Sale, whose translation forms the text of the Rev. Dr. Wherry's Commentary, has thus rendered the verses:—"And they who know not the scriptures say: Unless God speak unto us or thou show us a sign, we will not believe. So said those before them according to their saying; their hearts resemble each other. We have already shown manifest signs unto people who firmly believe. We have sent thee, in truth, a bringer of good tidings and a preacher, and thou shalt not be questioned concerning the companions of hell." The Rev. gentleman regards the demand for signs made by the unbelievers as a proof that the Holy Prophet showed no signs. His reference to the last verse points to the fact that the words "We have sent thee, in truth, a bringer of good tidings and a preacher" have been, in all probability, misconstrued by him as meaning that the Holy Prophet showed no miracles. But as the Holy Qur-ān clearly states in these very verses that for the believers open and manifest signs have been shown, it is impossible to infer from them that the Holy Prophet did not show any miracles. If the demand of unbelievers for signs be considered as proof of the absence of signs, it will be impossible to prove

that any of the prophets showed any signs. Take for instance Christ. Throughout His life-time the unbelievers continued to clamour for signs. In Matt. XII, 38 & 39, we read that the Scribes and Pharisees demanded a sign from Christ; and following Rev. Dr. Wherry's mode of reasoning, one may infer the absence of signs on the part of Christ. But such an inference would be quite inconsistent with the Gospel text, because a few verses back in the same chapter (v. 22), mention is made of a miracle of Christ. In short, if the demand of the opponents be made the groundwork for drawing inferences, almost all the truths of the world will have to be rejected. We must take the claimant at his own word, and not at the word of his antagonists. When the Holy Book of Islam clearly speaks of the Holy Prophet having shown manifest signs, it cannot be said that, according to the Holy Qur-ān the Prophet of Islam (on whom be peace and blessings of God) showed no signs. Non-Muslims are, of course, at liberty to question the miraculous character of those signs, but that the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) did claim to have shown signs is borne out by the words of the Holy Qur-ān and cannot be doubted. For the general definition and other particulars of a miracle, and for an account of the miracles of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) See Introduction.

2. The correct translation of **فَاسِقُونَ** *fāsiqūn* (the rebellious) is not 'evil-doers,' as some English Translators have rendered it. Literally, the word means, "those who have taken upon themselves to observe what the law orders and have acknowledged its authority, and then go against it" (Lane's Lexicon).

The Holy Qur-an continues that their denial of the Holy Prophet was quite unreasonable, because, in the first place, his claim was grounded on convincing arguments, and in the second, they had promised their prophets to accept the Prophet who was to appear from among the brethren of the Israelites. But although all the conditions detailed in the prophecies concerning the Promised One had been fulfilled, yet they persisted in their denial

مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ نَبَذَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ كِتَابَ
 اللَّهِ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ¹⁰² وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا
 الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَى مُلْكٍ سُلَيْمٍ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمٌ وَلَا سُلَيْمٌ
 الشَّيَاطِينُ كَفَرُوا يَعْلَمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ
 بِبَابِلَ هَارُوتَ وَمَارُوتَ وَمَا يَعْلَمَانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّى يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا
 نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ
 الْمُرءِ وَزَوْجِهِ وَمَا هُمْ بِضَارِّينَ بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَ

*muṣaddiqul-lī mā ma'a-hum nabadḥa farīqum-minalladhīna utul-kitāba kitāballāhi warā'a zuhūri-
him ka anna hum tā ya'lamūn.*

103. *Wattaba'ū mā tatluṣ-shayāṭīnu 'alā mulki Sulaimān, wa mā kafara Sulaimānu wa lākin-
nashshayātina kafarū yu'allimū-nannāsas-sihra, wa mā unzila 'alal malakaini bi Būbila Hārūta wa
Mārūt; wa mā yu'allimāni min ahadin ḥattā yaqulā inna-mā nahnu fitnatun fa lū takfur; fa yata-
'allamūna min humā mā yufarriqūna bi-hi bainal-mar'i wa zaujih; wa mā hum bi-dārrīna bi-hi min
ahadin illa bi-idhnillāh; wa*

102. And ^awhen there came to them from Allāh a Messenger, verifying that which was with them, a section of those to whom the Book was given ^bcast the Book of Allāh behind their backs, as though they knew not.¹

1. It shows that a class of men knowing that the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) fulfilled in himself all the prophecies con-

tained in their scriptures did not still accept him, and thus set aside the commandments of God as if they had no knowledge thereof.

and thus belied their own scriptures (v. 100, 101, 102).

يَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَالُهُ

فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ نَبِّئْهُمْ مَا شَرَّ مَا شَرَّ وَأَيُّهَا أَنْفُسُهُمْ كَانُوا

يَعْلَمُونَ ۝ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَمَثُوبَةٌ مِّنْ عِندِ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ ۝¹⁰³

yata'allamūna mā yadurru hum wa lā yanfa'u-hum ; wa la qad 'alimū la-ma-nishtarā-hu mā lahū fil ākhirati min khalāq ; wa la bi'sa mā sharau bi-hi anfusa-hum ; lau kānū ya'lamūn.

104. Wa lau anna hum āmanū wattaqau la-mathubatum-min 'indillāhi khair;

* *lit.*
followed.

103. And they *follow what the ^a rebellious men followed during the reign of Solomon ; and Solomon disbelieved not, but it was the rebellious men who disbelieved : they taught men deceitful things. And (they follow) what was sent down to the two angels, Hārūt and Mārūt, ^b at Babylon. And these taught no one until they had said, 'We are but a ^c trial ; do not, therefore, disbelieve.' So men learnt from them that by which they made a distinction between man and his companion ; but they harmed no one thereby, except by the command of Allāh : whereas ^d these people learn what would harm them and profit them not. And certainly they have known that he who purchased it should have no portion in the future life ; and surely vile is that for which they have sold their souls ; had they but known !¹

1. Meanings of important words. تَلَا (talā) = 'followed.' Vide Lane's Lexicon, Part I.

shayā'irīn (Sing., shai'irān) = 'rebellious men.' Vide Lane's Lexicon, Part IV.

عَلَى 'alā (during) = فِي (in the time of) vide *Mughni*, p. 117 (first edition). مَلِك mulk (reign) = 'rule' or 'sovereignty' vide Lane's Lexicon, Part VIII, Supplement). Thus عَلَى مَلِك سليمان ('alā mulki Sulaimāna) means "In the time of Solomon's sovereignty, or during the reign of Solomon."

سِيف (deceitful things) means "producing what is false in the form of truth ; any event of which

the cause is hidden and which is imagined to be different from what it really is ; and embellishment by falsification and deceit (vide Lane's Lexicon, Part IV). Thus every falsehood, deceit or sign which is meant only to hide the real object from the public is included in the meaning of *sifr*.

Malak literally means "angel," but figuratively, it can be used to denote a handsome, or holy person, as we read in Chapter XII, 32 :—

إِن هَذَا إِلَّا مَلَكٌ كَرِيمٌ (يوسف) -

i. e., "He (Joseph) is not but an angel (malak)". As in the verse under discussion, the two angels are

Moreover, not content with passive denial, they hatched all manner of plots to make short work of him. One of these mean attempts on their part was that by secret negotiations they tried to excite the rulers of other countries against him, thinking that this would bring about his ruin, although it was written in their own scriptures that whoever stood against the *Promised Prophet* would perish. So, if he was the true prophet, neither they nor any king could succeed against him ; and if on the other hand, he was not *that prophet*, even then their hostile efforts were worse than useless, because it was written that whoever falsely pretended to be 'that prophet' would have short shrift, vide Deut. XVIII,

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described as teaching something to the people, therefore the word cannot be taken in its literal significance, because angels do not generally have free intercourse with human beings, as we learn from the verse :

وما منع الناس ان يؤمنوا اذ جاءهم الهدى الا ان قالوا
ابعث الله بشرا رسولا ○ قل لو كان في الارض ملكة
يمشون مطمئنين لنزلنا عليهم ملكا رسولا (بنى اسرائيل)

i.e., "Nothing has prevented men from accepting the guidance except that they say, What ! has God sent a man as His Messenger ? Say : If the earth had been inhabited by angels instead of men, We would have sent an angel as our Messenger" (XVII, 95, 96) ; that is to say, when the earth is peopled by human beings, then no other being but a man must come as a Messenger.

Similarly the Holy Qur-ān says elsewhere :—

وما ارسلنا من قبلك الا رجالا نوحي اليهم فسلولوا اهل
الذكر ان كنتم لا تعلمون (انبياء) -

i. e., "We have sent no other beings as our Messengers except men who received revelations from God ; ask the people of the Book, if ye have no knowledge" (XXI, 8). These two verses show that angels are not sent to men so as to live among them and teach them anything ; but, as clearly indicated by the Holy Qur-ān, they come with the word of God only to the prophets and the righteous people of God (though on very rare occasions they may be seen by other men also). Thus, as in the verse under discussion, these two beings (*Malakain*) are stated to have been living in the world and teaching people, therefore, the word *Malak* cannot be here taken to convey any other meaning except "a holy man." If, however, the word *Malak* be taken literally, then the obvious interpretation is that the angels brought revelations to the prophets, who again rehearsed the same to men.

ماروت (*Mūrūt*) and هاروت (*Hārūt*). These two are descriptive names. *Hārūt* comes from *harat* which means 'to tear,' hence *Hārūt* means "the tearer" (*Tājul 'Arūs*, Vol. I). *Mūrūt* is derived from the root *mart* which means 'to break,' and thus, *Mūrūt* means "the breaker" (*Tājul 'Arūs*, Vol. I). These two names signify that the object of the appearance of these prophets was also to 'tear' asunder or 'break' the glory and power of certain classes of people.

فِتْنَةٌ *Fitnah*, rendered as 'trial,' means "the trial whereby the condition of a man may be evinced or a means whereby the condition of a man is evinced in respect of good and evil (Lane's Lexicon, Part VI).

Explanation of the verse.—Many a legend absolutely unwarranted by, or rather, running counter to, the Holy Qur-ān and the reliable traditions cluster round this verse. It is evidently quite unreasonable to interpret this verse on the basis of those myths. For the right interpretation of the verse no external evidence is needed (much less

those fairy tales), the words being self-explanatory. It is clear from the verse itself that the Jews were bent on the same mischief which characterised them in the days of Solomon and during their captivity in Babylon. The verse further indicates that the mischief-mongers of Solomon's time were those 'rebellious men' who called him an unbeliever. God says that not Solomon but those men themselves were unbelievers. Again, the verse informs us that they taught to their associates such signs as conveyed to them meanings quite different from their generally accepted import, for the purpose of deceiving other people and concealing their activities. All this leads to the conclusion that this verse alludes to those secret plots which the enemies of Solomon were making against him, and by which they wished to break down his empire. It is also pointed out that in the days of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God those people were resorting to the self-same tactics, but they would fail. As the verse refers to a number of historical events, it appears to be advisable to relate them here at some length.

When the Jews saw that the Muslim empire was steadily expanding and that no opposition at the hands of the Arabs had been able to arrest their progress, they began to excite the outsiders against them. At that time there were two large empires in the neighbourhood of Arabia :—(1) The Byzantine or Eastern Roman Empire ; (2) The Persian Empire. As the Jews were already at enmity with the Roman Government, because they were in constant trouble under it, so it was only the Persian Government to which they could look for support and with which they were on good terms also. Harassed by the oppression of the Christian rulers, they had taken refuge in Persia where they enjoyed a good deal of religious freedom. From the time of Justinian (527 A. D.) onward, they were subjected to still greater oppression under the Christian rule, and no place of refuge was left for them except Persia, and thus their religious centre shifted from Judah and Jerusalem to Babylonia (*vide* Hutchinson's History of the Nations, p. 550). So, in the time of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God), the only Government to which they could look for help was that of Persia, where their co-religionists enjoyed much influence, especially in the reign of Chosroes II (*vide* Jewish Encyclopædia, Vol. IX, p. 648). In short, when the Jews saw that their efforts to check the progress of Islam had totally failed, they took to exciting the Persian Court against the Holy Prophet by various means, and as a result, Chosroes II issued orders to the Governor of Yemen to send to him the Arabian claimant to prophethood as a captive. But when the envoys of the Governor of Yemen came to the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God), he ordered them to see him the next day when he told them that his God had caused their king to be murdered. So they returned and related this incident to the Governor of Yemen. A few days after, the Governor received a letter from Siroes, the son of Chosroes, to the effect that he had killed his father on account of the latter's tyranny and that the Governor should, on his behalf, have

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the oath of allegiance renewed from all the chiefs of Yemen, and that the orders of his father about an inhabitant of Arabia must be considered as cancelled and no action taken until further orders from him (*vide* Tabari, Vol. III, pp. 1583 & 1584). Some historians, including Tabari himself, hold that it was the letter of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and the blessings of God) to Chosroes inviting him to Islam that was the occasion of his orders for the apprehension of the Holy Prophet. But on comparison of the dates of the above mentioned events, it turns out to be a mistaken view. The fact is that, prior to the receipt of the letter, his ears had been poisoned against the Holy Prophet by malicious reports and these were the basis for his arrogant action against him. No less bigoted a writer than Sir William Muir has also been forced to admit this fact (*vide* Muir's *Life of Muhammad*, p. 358).

In order to demonstrate the correctness of our view, we proceed to examine the dates. The ambassadors of the Holy Prophet were despatched with letters from Medina on the 1st of Muharram in the 7th year of the Muslim era, as we read in Zurqāni, Vol. II, p. 254 :—

لأن بعثة للملوك إنما كان بعد العود منها في غرة محرم
سنة سبع -

i.e., the event of sending envoys to the kings of the world took place on the 1st of Muharram, 7 A. H. " Comparing the lunar date of the Hejira with its solar date as given in the Historian's History of the World, Vol. VIII, p. 118, the above date (the 1st Muharram, 7 A. H.) can be fixed as the 4th March, 628 A. D., whereas Chosroes II, who sent orders to arrest the Holy Prophet had been assassinated on 28th February, 628 A. D. (*vide* Historians' History of the World, Vol. VIII, p. 95).

Thus, the view that the letter of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) was the cause of Chosroes' orders to arrest the Holy Prophet is absurd on the face of it, because the envoys of the Holy Prophet, as the above chronological survey indicates, were despatched from Medina to Madāin or Ctesiphon (the then capital of Persia) after the murder of Chosroes. So the only possible cause of Chosroes' ignominious orders for the capture of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) was the false reports which were generally sent to him by none other than the Jews ; and it is to these efforts of the Jews that the Holy Qur-ān alludes in the verse under discussion. It is also pointed out to them that it was foolish on their part to suppose that they would succeed in that way. Their attention is called to the fact that they had already been responsible for two secret machinations. The *first* was against Solomon, when some members of their community turned rebels, hatched plots, and stirred up bitter feelings against him by calling him an infidel, whereas he was not an infidel, but on the other hand infidels were those who opposed him, hurled imputations against him, and set up against him secret societies in which were taught signs and symbols having hidden meanings quite different from their open import. But the Jews them-

selves reaped the ill reward of their sinister schemes : their power, as a consequence, fell into decay, and at last they became so powerless that they were driven into exile towards Babylon. This account of Jewish secret societies and conspiracies and treacherous signs and symbols, as alluded to in this verse, finds corroboration in I Kings, XI, 1—6, where we read that the charge of idol-worship was spread broadcast against Solomon. An account of his enemies is found in I Kings XI, 14, 23, 26, and a reference to secret plots is met with in II Chron. X, 3 and 4, where we learn that the Jews had sent for Jeroboam, a bitter foe of Solomon, immediately after his death and had attempted to make him agree to some demands of theirs, involving certain imputations against Solomon, before the accession of Solomon's son to the throne. We learn about the secret signs from I Kings XI, 29-32, in which ten tribes of Israelites are likened to ten pieces of a garment, and Jeroboam is told that these ten tribes were on his side against Solomon, and so it proved to be ; for on the death of Solomon these ten tribes made Jeroboam their King. Again, the reference of the Holy Qur-ān to the infidelity of Solomon's enemies finds its corroboration in II Chron. XI, 15, from which we learn that the enemies of Solomon, who falsely charged him with unbelief, themselves, on rising to power, began to make temples for different idols and fell into idol-worship.

Besides the testimony of the Bible, there is another evidence to show that there was in the days of Solomon a secret society at work against him. An old tradition which was current among the mediæval Free Masons indicates that Solomon was envious of the superior intelligence of Horam, the chief architect who built the temple of Solomon. He is said to have attempted to kill the great Mason by having him thrown into a tank of molten brass, but he was saved by the spirit of his ancestor, Cain, who prophesied that at last his people would get the better of their enemy. Solomon, however, as the tradition goes, had him afterwards put to death. It is said of him that he had fixed certain secret signs which were a sort of mystery known only to him and his associates (*vide* Secret Societies of the World, Vol. II, pp. 1-10. It is to be regretted that the original book could not be had, and we had, therefore, to fall back on the Urdu translation of it). We further learn from this book that before the period of Accepted Masons, the same signs were used in all the Lodges as were current among the Masons of Solomon's time and that, at the time of initiation, the event of Horam was related to the new member partly by word of mouth, and partly in writing. However incredible the story as a whole may be, it, at least, points to the conclusion that Solomon's reign was, in one way or another, connected with secret societies which were much in vogue during his time.

The *second* occasion when, according to the Holy Qur-ān, the Israelites had a resort to secret societies, was during their captivity in Babylon. But this time they were not acting against any prophet, but were, on the other hand, working

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لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ۚ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقُولُوا سَاعِدَنَا وَقُولُوا نُنْظِرُكُمْ
وَأَسْمِعُوا وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۝ مَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ

aukānū ya'lamūn.

s. 13.

105. *Yā ayyu-hal-ladhīna āmanū lā taqūlū Rā'inū wa qūlunzurnā wasma'ū; wa lil-kāfirina adhābun alīm.* 106. *Mā yawad-dul-ladhīna kafarū min ahli-*

104. And if they had believed and feared God, better surely would have been the reward from Allāh, had they but known!

s. 13.

105. O ye who believe, say not, 'Rá'iná,' but say, 'Unzurná,' and hearken; and for the disbelievers is a painful punishment.'

under the leadership of two inspired personages. They were, in obedience to divine command, trying to bring about the deliverance of the Israelites. Their mission was to 'tear asunder' and 'break down' the empire of the foes of the Israelites. These holy men told the new members, at the time of initiation, that they were a sort of trial from God, serving to differentiate between the good and the bad, and that the Israelites should not therefore refuse to believe what they said, because this would lead them to infidelity. In their teachings they drew a distinction between the males and the females, confining the membership to the males only (this is an old practice found among most of the secret societies). It is also stated that the disciples of those holy men directed their activities against those alone for whose chastisement they were commanded by God.

In this narration, the Holy Qur-ān refers to the days when King Nebuchadnezzar brought the Jews as captives into Babylon and kept them there for a long time in slavery. But when Cyrus, King of Media and Persia, rose to power, the Israelites entered into a secret agreement with him and greatly facilitated his conquest of Babylon. In reward for this service, he allowed them to return to their own country and moreover helped greatly in the re-building of the Temple (*vide* Historians' History of the World, Vol. II, p. 126).

After stating that the Israelites of the Holy Prophet's days were following the same course which was adopted by the rebels of Solomon's days and which was later on adopted by them under two holy men in Babylon, it was necessary here to

point out the ultimate upshot of their endeavours against the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God), because on the previous two occasions their efforts had met with different results. The first conspiracy of theirs was directed against a prophet and the consequence was the gradual decadence of their power, ending in the total wreckage of their prestige and finally in their banishment to Babylon. On the second occasion, they took to the same course under two inspired personages, and the result was that they were led back to their native land and their enemy perished. Hence, in order to indicate whether the efforts of the Jews against the Holy Prophet would meet with failure, as they did in the days of Solomon, or with success as in Babylon, the Holy Qur-ān says:—

يَتَعْلَمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ -

i.e., "And these people learn that which will bring them harm and no good;" in other words, they will not be successful as they were in Babylon. Accordingly, the consequence of their hostile efforts was that Chosroes, their only supporter, met his death at the hands of his son, and they themselves were exiled from Arabia in the time of Omar. In the concluding portion of the verse, God adds:—

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآلَةِ مِنْ خَلَقٍ

i.e., "These people have known that a secret plotter against the elect of God can never reap a good fruit."

1. The Jews were in the habit of devising plans to detract from the reverential awe, with

18—19 (v. 103). So it was better for them to hold aloof from all mischief and have faith in what was written in their books, waiting patiently and God-fearingly to see the result. If they had done so, their lot would have been happier. They would have, in that case, been guided (v. 104).

After mentioning the intrigues which the Jews carried on with the outsiders to ruin the mission of the Holy Prophet, those of their machinations are spoken of by means of which they sought to sow dissension and discord among the Muslims, desiring to create a spirit of arrogance among them against the Holy Prophet and thus deprive them of the

الْكِتَابِ وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ۝ مَا نُنسِئُ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۝

kitābi wa lal-mushrikīna aṭ-ṭayyib min ḥayr min rabbi-kum; wallāhu yakhtassu bi-rahmatihī mā yashāʾ; wallāhu dhul-faḍlil-ʿaẓīm.

107. *Mā nansakh min āyatin au nunsihā na'ti bi kharim-minhā au mithli-hā; a-lam ta'lan annallāha 'alā kulli shai'in qadīr.*

108. *A-lam tā lam annallāha la-hū mulkus-samāwāti wal-arḍ;*

106. They who disbelieve, whether of the people of the Book or of those who associate gods with Allāh, "desire not that any good should be sent down to you from your Lord; and Allāh chooses for His mercy whomsoever He will; and Allāh is of exceeding bounty."

107. ^b Whatever *ayat* We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or one like it. Knowest thou not that Allāh has power over all things?"

which the minds of the Muslims were inspired towards the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God). One of these mean attempts was to address such words to the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) as could bear a two-fold sense, one good and the other bad. The Muslims also, in imitation of the Jews and in ignorance of their real motive, began to imitate their language. One of the words used by the Jews was رَاعِنَا *rā'inā* which is a compound formed from رَاع *rā'i* and نَا *nā*, and means 'show favour to us.' But the word can also be traced to the root رَاعِن *rā'in*, which means 'a fool.' When used in addressing a person, it takes the form of *rā'inā* and means "O, fool!" In this verse, God forbids the Muslims to use such words, and advises them to use such language as may be

respectful and unequivocal. He exhorts them to say انظُرْنَا *unẓurnā*, instead of رَاعِنَا *rā'inā*, because the former, unlike *rā'inā*, conveys no bad sense but only means 'have a regard for us'. He further advises them to listen to the Prophet attentively, so that they might not be in need of using such words (The word *rā'inā* or *unẓurnā* is used as an apology for not hearing or understanding what was said. It corresponds to the English expression "I beg your pardon").

1. That is, the Jews and others are bent upon causing the Muslims to go astray from the path of truth and desire to deprive them of the promised blessings. So, the Muslims should ponder over their words and take care that they may not be misled.

rich rewards they were reaping as a community. But the Holy Qur-an says that when God chooses a people for the favour of His revelation, such schemes, whether individual or collective, cannot do them any harm (vv. 106, 108). The Jews should have pondered over the fact that when God abrogates a scripture, He replaces it by a like or better one. When nobody could check the efficacy and predominance of the revelations sent to Moses and other prophets, how was it possible for anybody to stand in the way of this revelation which has replaced them, because God never replaces

EXPLANATORY NOTES—continued.

by the glozing words of the Jews. The word *خير* (good) in this verse particularly means *revelation*.

2. There exists much misunderstanding about this verse. Some have attempted to infer from this that some of the verses of the Holy Qur-ān have been abrogated. But this conclusion is grievously erroneous and unwarranted. There is nothing in this verse to indicate that the word *āyat* occurring in this verse refers to the Quranic verses. But in the preceding as well as the following verses, reference is made to the *people of the Book* and their jealousies for the new revelation, which clearly shows that the *āyat* (commandments) represented in this verse as abrogated belong to the previous revelations. It is pointed out in this verse that portions of some of the old scriptures did justify abrogation and portions again had, through length of time, been consigned to oblivion so that no trace of them could be found in the heavenly books. It was, therefore, necessary to modify certain portions and to restore the lost ones. So, God abrogated some portions of the old books and replaced them as well as the missing portions by a better or similar revelation. This is the only meaning which is consistent with the context and the general spirit of the Holy Qur-ān. The other meaning put on the verse by some translators, *viz.*, that certain verses of the Holy Qur-ān have been abrogated, is not only opposed to the words of the Holy Qur-ān and the context of the verse, but is also against reason; nor can any saying of the Holy Prophet be quoted in its favour. On the contrary, the Holy Prophet is reported to have said that the whole of the Holy Qur-ān must be strictly followed, while he himself acted, and made others act, upon all the teachings of the Holy Qur-ān, till the last moment of his life. Besides this, the Holy Qur-ān itself testifies in emphatic and unequivocal terms to its own immaculacy. The memorable verse,

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ .

"Verily *We* have sent down this remembrancer, and verily *We* are its protector" (XV, 10), leads to the conclusion that God has promised to protect both the letter and the spirit of the Holy Qur-ān. If the abrogation of any part of the Holy Qur-ān be conceded, the promise about the protection of the spirit of the Holy Qur-ān becomes null and void, for in that case it would be impossible to distinguish the abrogated portions from the rest of the Holy Qur-ān. The truth is that the doctrine of abrogation, as understood by some of the translators, is fallacious and misleading. No part of the Qur-ān has become inoperative. The whole of the Holy Book of Islam, nay, every letter and vowel point of it, is infinitely above the possibility of abrogation. There is absolutely no self-contradiction in the Holy Qur-ān, and therefore there is no need of resorting to the much discussed theory of abrogation. The so-called contradictions only betray the want of deep study on the part of those who favour this doctrine. When one fails to understand two verses in their true relations, one sees a contradiction between them and takes recourse to the convenient

theory that one of the two verses has been abrogated by the other. As soon as they appear to be reconcilable, the abrogation theory becomes gratuitous.

It will be clear from the above that the advocate of the abrogation theory does not stand on a sure ground, inasmuch as his inference is no more than a mere conjecture. There is no unanimity of opinion as to the exact number of the Quranic verses supposed to have been cancelled. It varies from 5 to 500 with different writers. This want of agreement as regards the number of abrogated verses is sufficient to convince the observing mind that the cancellation theory is no more than a mere guess-work. The true meaning of the verse, as has been pointed out above, is that a portion of the previous law has been replaced by a better one in the Holy Qur-ān, and certain commandments which were lost, have been conserved in the same book. Whoever studies the Holy Qur-ān with an unbiassed mind cannot fail to notice that common sense readily recognises the excellence and superiority of all such injunctions of the Holy Qur-ān as differ from those of the previous scriptures; and again such teachings of the Holy Qur-ān as are not found in the former scriptures are perfectly useful and highly beneficial for the edification of man. It may be noted in passing that the verse under discussion is clear on the point that, according to the Holy Qur-ān, the previous scriptures have been corrupted.

With regard to the abrogation theory, the Rev. Dr. Wherry has a note in which he states that the Holy Qur-ān had to start this abrogation theory in order to escape the objections of the Jews to the contradictions contained in it. The disposal of the abrogation theory completely disposes of his criticism. Still it may be noted, to the discredit of the Rev. gentleman, how led by his religious prejudice, he has overstepped the bounds of fairness and, instead of deriving his authorities from the Holy Qur-ān itself or the well-known and authentic works on traditions, he has drawn his materials from the works of obscure authors who enjoy no credit for reliability or accuracy. What is more to be pitied is that he has not been able to make an intelligent use of even this inferior material. He thinks, for instance, that, according to Muslims, God can cancel past events of history and mention others instead, and that He can supplant *immutable truths* by other principles. This is evidently erroneous, because even those who accept the theory of cancellation accept it with regard only to the commandments and prohibitions, and not with regard to events of history or universal truths. Ibn-i-Kathir says in his Commentary, Vol. I, p. 257:—

لا يكون ذلك الا في الامر والنهي والحظر والاطلاق والينع والاباحة فاما الاخبار فلا يكون فيها ناسخ ومنسوخ -

i.e., "Abrogation does not take place, but in command, prohibition, and permission. As to facts of history, there can be no abrogation in them."

وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ¹⁰⁸ أَمْ تَرِيدُونَ أَن تَسْأَلُوا
رُسُلَكُمْ كَمَا سَأَلَ مُوسَىٰ مِن قَبْلُ¹⁰⁹ وَمَن يَتَّبِدْ لِّلْكَفْرِ بِإِيمَانٍ
فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ¹⁰⁹ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُمْ

wa mā la-kum-min dūn-il-lāhi min-waliyyin-wa lā naṣīr.

109. *Am turīdūna an tas'alū rasūla-kum kamā su'ila Mūsā min qabl; wa man-yatabad-da-lil-kufra bil-imāni fa qad ḍalla sawā' as-sabīl.*

110. *Wadda kathīrum-min ahlil-kitābi lau yaruddūna kum-*

108. Knowest thou not ^a that the kingdom of the heavens and the earth is for Allāh alone?¹ And for you there is neither any guardian nor any helper besides Allāh.²

* *Lil*
one sent
(by God.)

109. Do ye wish to ask of your Prophet* ^b as of Moses they asked before this?³ And whoso exchanges belief for disbelief has undoubtedly gone astray from the straight path.⁴

As for Rev. Dr. Wherry's statement that the Muslims hold the eternal truths of the Bible, such as incarnation, atonement, etc., as abrogated by the Holy Qur-ān, he is quite mistaken in so thinking. Muslims reject some of the dogmas of the Christian or the Jewish religion not because the Holy Qur-ān declares them as cancelled, but because they hold that either those dogmas are subsequent interpolations or that they have crept into these faiths through long contact with other religions. The Trinity or the Sonship of Christ or the Jewish idea of exclusive title to salvation and other cognate doctrines are not warranted by the Bible.

1. God's is the kingdom of heaven and earth. When earthly governments fall into decay, He takes them away from incapable hands and entrusts them to better and worthier people. Thus every new age witnesses the appearance of a new empire mightier than those that went before. Even similar

is the case with spiritual Government. God chooses whomsoever He likes for His heavenly kingdom and can reveal a faith which may be superior to all the faiths of the world that have gone before, much in the same way as He can call into existence systems of government better than any that the world has witnessed. There is a delicate implication in the verse which should not be missed, *viz.*, that the Muslims, though despised and persecuted to-day, will receive not only the spiritual favours from God, but will be masters of large earthly kingdoms as well.

2. That is, O Muslims! let not the enemy deceive you. God alone is your helper at this crisis, although the whole world stands against you.

3. The Jews had set their heart on making the Muslims insolent in their attitude towards the

a thing by a worse one (v. 107). Again the Jews should have realised the fact that as this revelation proceeded from the Lord of the universe, therefore, their opposition to it would lead to their own ruin (v. 108).

Then the third artifice which the Jews employed to overthrow the mission of the Holy Prophet is mentioned. They asked the Holy Prophet such absurd and silly questions as had no bearing on religion. This they did to inoculate the Muslims with the same spirit of stupid questioning. Under pretence of friendship, they often induced even the Muslims to resort to needless questions, so that their hearts might gradually become estranged from the dignity of faith and give way to doubt. In warning the Muslims against such a course, the Holy Qur-ān points out that these people had ruined themselves by putting similar questions to Moses and that the Muslims should not, therefore,

مِّنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِكُمْ كُفَّارًا حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِهِمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ
لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ فَأَعْفُوا وَاصْفَحُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝¹¹⁰ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ

mim-ba'di imūni kum kuffāran, ḥasadam-min 'indi anfusi him-mim-ba'di mā tabayyana la hu-mul ḥaqq, fa'fū wasfaḥū ḥattā ya'tiyallāhu bi amrih; innallāha 'alā kulli shai'in qadīr.

111. *Wa aqimus-ṣalāta wa ātuz-zakah; wa mā tuqaddimū li anfusi kum-*

110. Many of the people of the Book "desire to turn you again into disbelievers after ye have believed," out of envy from themselves,² after the truth has dawned upon them; but ³forgive and turn away from them, ⁴till Allāh sends down His decree;⁵ verily, Allāh has power over all things.

Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) and, therefore, they used to ask him frivolous questions, thereby inducing the Muslims to follow their example. They thought the Muslims would, by being rude to their Prophet, forfeit the promised reward, or, by entertaining unfriendly feelings towards him, desert the cause of Islam. Consequently, the Muslims are here prohibited from asking impertinent questions. But this does not mean that they were prevented from making any necessary enquiries about religion. For we know on good authority that the Muslims did continually ask questions that pertained to matters of faith. Such pertinent questions they were encouraged to ask: only they were forbidden to put "such questions as were put to Moses,"—questions that proceeded not from a desire to learn but from a spirit of perverseness and arrogance. As to the questions put to Moses, the Holy Qur-ān refers to one in Chapter IV, 154:—

يَسْأَلُكَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ تَنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَابًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَقَدْ
سَأَلُوا مُوسَىٰ أَكْبَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَقَالُوا أَرِنَا آلَاءَ جَهَنَّمَ -

i.e., "The people of the Book ask thee to bring down for them a book (ready written) from heaven. Verily, they made a more arrogant request to Moses asking him to show God to them manifestly." This verse gives us an indication as to the nature of the questions that were put to Moses, and it was exactly such questions as these which the

Muslims were forbidden to put to their Prophet. Similarly, in verses 68, 69, 70 & 71 of this Chapter some more questions of the Israelites are enumerated, which they might have done well to avoid. In short, the Muslims are warned against following the example of the Israelites and forbidden to ask such questions as savour of arrogance. They are, however, quite at liberty to put questions with a view to satisfy their honest doubts on matters religious, and to enlighten themselves on deeper spiritual truths.

4. That is, when truth comes home to a man, then the consequence of saddling it with superfluous questions and needless conditions can only be drifting into a state of disbelief.

1. By manifold devices, some of which have been referred to above, the people of the Book wished to lead the Muslims astray from Islam, and their designs had their basis in jealousy, for they could not bear to see the prosperity of the Ishmaelites.

2. That is to say, the Holy Prophet has done nothing to excite their jealousy, but it is their own evil nature that has given rise to it.

3. That is, do not quarrel with them for this undesirable conduct of theirs, but wait patiently in a

follow their evil example. It was only a clever move which those people had made use of, to estrange the Muslims from their faith, and the Muslims must, therefore, refrain from falling into their trap, and if those people teased them much, they should turn away from them and wait for the decision of God. (vv. 109, 110). To escape the wicked designs

¹¹¹
 مِّنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ۝ وَقَالُوا
 لَنُيَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِنَّا كَانُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَىٰ تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ
¹¹²
 قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۝ بَلَىٰ مَن أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ

min khairin tajidūhu 'indallāh; inallāha bi mā ta'malūna baṣīr.

112. *Wa qūlu laṭ-yadkhulal-jannata illā man kāna Hudan au Naṣūrā; tilka amūniyyu-hum qul hātū burhāna kum in kuntum ṣādiqīn.* 113. *Balā man aslama wajha-hu*

* زكاة, legal-
alms.

111. And "observe prayer and pay the *zakāt; and whatever good ye send beforehand for yourselves, ye shall find it with Allāh; surely Allāh sees what ye do.¹

112. And they said: "None shall ever enter heaven except those who are Jews or Christians; such are their vain wishes. Say: Bring your proof if ye speak the truth²

spirit of forbearance till God Himself manifest some way for decision. And so it happened. Not content with the harshness and severity of their language, the Jews of Medina took to persecuting the Muslims, not even refraining from bloodshed. At last, permission was given to the Muslims to fight them as a measure of self-defence; and the persecutors were, to their undying disgrace, completely worsted by a handful of Muslims.

There is a subtle distinction between the meanings of عَفْوٌ *afw* (forgive) and مَفْهُوجٌ *safḥ* (turn away).

Whereas the former means *abstaining from punishment*, the latter signifies *turning one's face away*. By using the words together, God exhorts the Muslims not only to refrain from punishing the Jews for their open hostilities and covert machinations, but even from according to them a harsh treatment, and bids them to remain aloof from them.

1. When one is subjected to continued persecutions, it is only human nature to lose patience and

feel impelled to take revenge. But the Muslims were enjoined to meekly endure trouble and torments which it is impossible for ordinary mortals to do. In order to be able to achieve this feat of patience and fortitude, they were ordered to resort to divine worship on the one hand and humanity to mankind or the other. By so doing, they would acquire from God the power to endure, and He would also make good any loss the Muslims might suffer and would not let any of their deeds go unrewarded.

2. Christianity, as well as Judaism, was meant for the guidance of the Israelites alone. Just as Moses appeared to deliver from continued thralldom only the Israelites, similarly Jesus came to gather the stray sheep of the Israelites alone into one fold. The mission of Jesus was not meant for the whole world. (*Vide* Matt. VII 6; X, 6; XV, 24; Mark VII, 27). Though later on the followers of Christ violated the limit imposed upon Christ's mission and claimed universality for it, yet Christ was sent only to the Israelites, and the foremost object of His life was to

of the Jews, they should seek the help of God, first, by attaining nearness to Him by means of prayers, and secondly by trying to ameliorate the condition of the poverty-stricken by giving legal alms (*Zakāt*). If they spent their lives thus righteously, their deeds would bring in rich reward from the All-seeing God (v. 111).

So far the Christian faith was not separately addressed because, as a matter of fact, it is only an offshoot of Judaism; but as the followers of Christ had, to all intents and purposes, separated themselves from the Jewish faith, so here the Holy Qur-an has mentioned them also along with the Jews, indicating that their case was no better than that of the latter, both being helpless victims to the delusion that one could obtain salvation merely by becoming a Jew or a Christian. They forgot the fact that when God had established a fresh covenant, salvation could not be possible without conforming thereto. If, however, the Christians and the Jews were justified in their claims, they should advance some reason or scriptural evidence to demonstrate that it was enough for the purposes of salvation to join their folds (and they could not do it, because in their scriptures there was foretold the appearance of a prophet whom it was enjoined upon them to accept and whose rejection was stated to lead to estrangement from God) (v. 112).

لِلّٰهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ ۖ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُونَ ۝ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ النَّصْرَىٰ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ ۖ وَقَالَتِ

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lillāhi wa huwa muhsinun fa la-hū ajruhū 'inda Rabbi-hi, wa lū khaufun 'alaihim wa lū hum yahzanūn. R. 14. 114. Wa qālatil-yahūdu, laisatin-Naṣārā 'alā shai'in-wa qālatin-

113. Yea! "whoso resigns his self to Allāh and is the doer of good deeds, his reward is with his Lord; and no fear shall come upon such, neither shall they grieve.'

uplift that people. As other nations of the world are also the creation of God, it is therefore only right to believe that God must have made some arrangement for their guidance as well. Hence, it is quite unreasonable on the part of the Jews and Christians to hold that the door of salvation was closed against the followers of other faiths. Such a view would mean that God had confined salvation to certain tribes, to the entire exclusion of other nations, which is evidently absurd.

Islam is not exposed to the same objection. In the *first* place, it is not a tribal faith, but it is universal in character. In the Holy Qur-ān it is said about the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) "قل يا أيها الناس إني رسول الله إليكم جميعا" Say O ye men, I am sent as a Messenger to you all" (VII, 159). Moreover, the Holy Prophet himself says about his mission:—

ارسلت إلى الناس كلهم عامة وكان من قبلي إنما يرسل إلى قومه -

i.e., "I am sent for the whole world, while previous prophets were sent to particular tribes" (Musnad of Imam Ahmad Hambal). *Secondly* unlike Judaism and Christianity, Islam does not hold hell to be everlasting. As for Paradise, it teaches that its bounties are never-ending, but Hell it regards as a place of reformation, where the sinners will be purged of their sins to enable them to find their way ultimately to heaven and enjoy the reward of the good deeds they did in this world—there being none who has not done, more or less, some good deeds in this life.

1. وجه (Wajh) means *attention, self or face*; and اسلم (aslama) means *surrendered completely*. In refutation of the claims of the Jews and the Christians to the monopoly of salvation, the Holy Qur-ān men-

tions the fundamental principle that, for salvation, it is not of any avail to be a Christian or a Jew, but that salvation is the ultimate outcome of absolute surrender to God's will and unqualified compliance with His law. He who does this secures his salvation; mere profession of a faith is not enough. God revealed different faiths at different times, but the single purpose of the revelation of these faiths of varying degree of perfection was to teach man the grand truth that his salvation lay in absolute resignation to the will of God and carrying it through in life. To confine salvation within the pale of Christianity or Judaism is, therefore, not at all consistent with the merciful character of God's dispensation. In fact, the followers of all the revealed faiths, who resigned themselves to God and acted up to His commandments, might hope to obtain salvation. It is perfectly clear that when salvation depends on God's grace and will, then whoever does His will should have salvation. And the only way of doing the will of God is to accept all that comes from Him with the utmost readiness. It will not do to accept the revelation of some prophets, and reject those of others, as was done by the Jews and the Christians who, though believing in the previous prophets, refused to accept the Holy Prophet of Islam (may peace and blessings of God be upon him).

The meaning of the word محسن (Muhsin), (doer of good deeds) occurring in this verse, has been explained by the Holy Prophet as follows:—

ان تعبد الله كأنك تراه فان لم تكن تراه فانه يراك -

i.e., "You may become a محسن (Muhsin) if you pray to God in such a spirit of reality and certitude that you feel you are seeing God, or failing that, with the lower degree of conviction that, at any rate, He is seeing you." Everybody can, with reference to his own devotion, realise the fulness of conviction

After refuting the views of the Jews and the Christians, the Holy Qur-an has enunciated the principle that the only means of salvation for man is to be obedient to God and to listen to His message (v. 113).

النَّصْرَى لَيْسَتْ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ ۖ وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ ۚ كَذَلِكَ
 قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ ۚ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ
 يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ۖ ¹¹⁴ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ صَنَعَ مَسَاجِدَ
 لِلَّهِ أَنْ يُدْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَىٰ فِي خَرَابِهَا ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَنْ
 يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَائِفِينَ ۚ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ ۖ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ

Naṣārā laisatil Yahudu 'alā shat'in-wa hum yatlunal-kitāb; kadhālika qūlalladhīna lā ya'lamūna mīthla qawli-him, fallāhu yaḥkumu baina hum yaumal qiyūmati fī mā kūnū fī hī yakhtalifūn.

115. *Wa man aẓlamu mim-man mana'a masājidal-lūhi an-yudhkara fī hasmu-hū wa sa'ā fī kharābi hā; ulā'ika mū kāna la hum an-yadkhulū hā illū khā'ifīn; la hum fid-dunyā khizyun-wa lahum fil-ākhirati*

R. 14.

114. And "the Jews say: 'The Christians are on nothing'* and the Christians say: 'The Jews are on nothing,'* and they both read the Book;" likewise say those who have no knowledge, according to their saying.² But Allāh shall judge between them on the day of Resurrection concerning that in which they differ.

*i.e., their thoughts and actions are not based on truth.

involved in this most proper attitude to God as is suggested by the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him). By way of illustration, let us imagine a scene of fierce warfare. A battle is raging hot all round. On all sides there is death and destruction. The hearts of men are filled with despair. All at once the king becomes visible in the midst of the despairing troops. What a change is effected by the mere realisation of the presence of the king in the field! The staggering soldiers take courage and stand their ground, the drooping spirits become lifted-up and the charging columns find their fury redoubled, and victory seems to be looming large before them. The presence of

the king even at a distance does not fail to cheer up the minds of his soldiers. The illustration goes to cover the case of a truly religious man who has to fight the battle of life, and struggle his way through thick and thin. Imagine the case of the religious hero who, by following in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet of Arabia (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) has attained to that stage when he realises the Creator of universe as revealed in himself in all His glory. The faith of such a man becomes deep-rooted, so much so that not the greatest temptation can shake him. He stands there like the mighty oak over which storms have blown without doing it any harm.

Then another failing of the Christians and the Jews is mentioned. They were so much given over to prejudice and perverseness that they spoke about each other's faith as wholly worthless and absolutely good for nothing. When both read the Bible, they must have had a good deal in common. So the wholesale denial of good by each to the other is inexplicable (v. 114). And so far had the mutual animosity gone that they did not like to see each other at worship, and,

EXPLANATORY NOTES—*continued.*

It may be noted here that Islam is not satisfied with a formal faith, but it invites people to that fulness of conviction which enables man to see and realise the glory of God and, like all the sages and prophets of yore, to enjoy constant fellowship with Him. This is the distinction of Islam that it makes its true followers realise the presence of the Divinity and makes continued converse with Him a reality, and thus it enables them to establish true connection with God even in this earthly life. This is really the beginning of salvation.

1. Nothing is more antagonistic to the spirit of Islam than opposition to truth, wherever and in whatever form it may happen to be. Even a cursory study of the Holy Qur-ān leaves no room for doubt that Islam is ever ready to acknowledge truth wherever found and recognises virtue, wherever and to whatever extent it happens to exist. But, on the contrary, undisciplined minds are apt to lose their balance and tend to go to extremes in harbouring love or hatred. In the enthusiasm of love, they are blind to the faults of their friends; and because of excessive hatred, they lose all sense of appreciation for the virtues of their foes. The followers of the different faiths refuse to acknowledge the virtues of their opponents, but, on the other hand, regard them as capable of only vice and iniquity. Each party holds the other grossly in error and is not prepared to admit even the faint semblance of virtue in the other, although total absence of virtue in any faith is an absolute impossibility. On careful scrutiny, it will be found that all the different faiths possess certain truths, and the true religion is so-called not because others are totally devoid of excellences, but because it possesses virtues in a greater degree than others and is free from defects. Unfortunately, however, this noble principle is not adequately recognised, the result being a religious fanaticism which is becoming more and more intense every day. Islam hates the very sound of this narrowness, and while it claims to be full of truth and perfection, it acknowledges certain virtues in all existing faiths of the world, and even counsels other faiths of the world to desist from the wholesale denunciation of their rival creeds and to acknowledge the virtues of their rival faiths. In the verse under discussion, light has been thrown on this subject too, and the Jews and the Christians are upbraided for bearing ill-will towards, and seeing no good points in, each other, although both are the students of the same book and so far share one virtue at least. It is obvious that if the principle herein enunciated by the Holy Qur-ān be acted upon, a reign of peace will at once set in because all religious strife originates in misunderstanding. Many critics take a hostile atti-

tude and level rabid attacks against a faith before they have had occasion to be familiar with it, the natural consequence being that the adherents of the faiths thus wantonly assailed come to conceive a hatred towards the creeds of the assailants, and thus all chances of cool and calm judgment are lost and, instead, religious strife is fomented. As a result, the followers of one creed come to regard the teachings of all other faiths, merely on the basis of the garbled reports of their adversaries, as superstitious, unreasonable, impracticable, and detrimental to the best interests of humanity. But a sympathetic study will not fail to reveal certain excellences that surely exist side by side with the weak points in every religion, with the only exception of the one true faith of the world, which must, of course, be free from all defects and drawbacks. Such a sympathetic approach to the faiths of the world is sure to lead to mutual amity and goodwill. The practice of ridiculing other faiths has grown into a fashion in this age, although it is fraught with consequences destructive of the peace of the world.

One is simply lost in wonder how Sale and Rev. Dr. Wherry, in their Translation and Commentary respectively, have indulged in a sweeping condemnation of the Holy Book of Islam. They attack the Holy Qur-an with a double-edged sword. Wherever in the Holy Qur-an they have found something in direct conflict with the Bible, they have most readily charged the Holy Qur-an with mis-statement. If, on the other hand, they have found in it something in conformity with the Biblical word, they have forthwith hurled against it the charge of plagiarism. The contents of the Holy Qur-an could comprise matters either additional, or contrary, to the Biblical teachings, but in either case they are set down as false. How vexatious is the situation for the seeker after truth !

2. That is, this is not the case only with the Jews and the Christians, but the adherents of every other faith who 'lack true knowledge' are also guilty of wholesale denunciation of the other faiths of the world.

115

عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝ وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۚ فَأَيْنَمَا تُولَؤُوا فِثْمَ وَجْهِهِ

'adhūbun 'azīm.

116. *Wa lillūhil-mashriqu wal maghribu, fa-ainamā tuwallū fa Thamma wajhul—*

115. And who is more unjust than he who "prohibits the name of Allāh being glorified in Allāh's temples and seeks to ruin them. It was not proper for such men to enter them except with fear. For them is disgrace in this world; and for them is a great punishment in the next."

1. This verse is a forcible indictment against the outrages which the followers of different faiths perpetrate, out of malice, against their opponents' modes and places of worship. They hinder people from worshipping God in their sacred places, and even go so far as to destroy their temples. Such acts of violence are denounced here in strong terms and a lesson of charity and tolerance is inculcated. Indeed, many and varied are the outrages which were committed before the days of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and the blessings of God), and which are still being committed in several parts of the world. The sacrileges generally perpetrated may thus be summarised:—

In times of war it is a common experience that the victors generally pull down or lock up the places of worship belonging to the vanquished or prevent them from worshipping therein. Again, there are people who do not like to allow men of other persuasions to worship in, or even to enter, their temples. These and other outrages were very rife in the days of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God), and were regarded as not only desirable but necessary. History shows that these atrocities were not the innovations of that age, but, on the other hand, they can be traced to the remotest antiquity. Long and continued indulgence in them had made them matters of course. Even now these outrages are present in some form or other. Although the advance of culture and learning has minimised the chance of holy places being sacrilegied, there are still some communities that adhere to this relic of barbarism. As to the fanatical practice of preventing others from conducting their service in one's own place of worship, it is found to be common even in these days. The Christian church, the Jewish synagogue, the Hindu temple and the Parsi fane are all closed against all worshippers except those to whom the places of worship belong. From the civilised people

down to the savages of Africa, none can afford to tolerate it. Some even go so far as to bar admittance to outsiders into their place of worship. The Holy Qur-ān prohibits such narrow-minded and unjust acts, for however much the views may differ and opinions disagree as to the attributes of God, it is by no means allowable to hinder people from worshipping the Almighty King of Kings in their temples and thus make them a scene of desolation. According to the Holy Qur-ān, all men, whether conquerors or the conquered, enjoy the free right to use their own temples, and if some body wishes to worship God in his own way in a place of worship not belonging to his faith, he need not be prevented therefrom, because a temple is a place dedicated to the name of God and one should act God-fearingly therein. This is the verdict of God, and those who set it at defiance, says the Holy Qur-ān, shall be punished here as well as hereafter.

This is what the Holy Qur-ān teaches about respect and regard for the worship of other faiths. It is impossible to find in other faiths a parallel to these teachings, which are not only agreeable to reason and common sense but catholic in spirit and conducive to public peace. But the pity is that, in the face of such wholesome teachings, Islam is being denounced as a religion of fanaticism. We would have listened to the objection with all patience, if the critics had offered something better in the name of the religions they profess. In the absence of a better substitute, the objection simply serves to expose the hollowness of the critics' position. It is the easiest thing in the world to raise objections but an assertion unsupported by reasons cannot serve any purpose. We can declare, without the least fear of contradiction, that Islam has beaten all existing faiths of the world in the promulgation of a spirit of broad-mindedness and regard for truth. In its injunctions about the inviolable character of all places of worship, a severe blow is dealt to all

whenever possible, prevented each other from worshipping God and did not allow each other to enter their sanctuaries for worship, although one must be very circumspect about matters relating to the places of worship, it being by no means allowable to prevent men from worshipping the Divine Being (v. 115). 'So the Muslims are told not to fear the oppositor

اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ¹¹⁶ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَنَهُ طَبْلٌ لَهُ
مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلٌّ لَهُ قَانِتُونَ¹¹⁷ بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَ

lāh; innallāha wāsi'un'alīm.

117. *Wa qūlut-takha-dhallāhu waladan subḥanah; bal-lahū mā fis-samāwāti wal-ard; kullul-lahū qānitūn.* 118. *Badi'us-samāwāti wal-*

116. And Allāh's is the east and the west, so whithersoever ye turn, there is the face of Allāh.¹ Verily Allāh is All-bountiful, Knowing.

117. And they say: "Allāh has taken to Himself a son." Holy is He! Nay, everything in the heavens and the earth is for Him. To Him are all obedient.

sorts of religious warfare. The first person who carried this golden principle into practice was the Holy Founder of Islam (may peace and blessings of God be upon him), who allowed the Christians of Najrān to hold their service in the Muslim Mosque. We read in the Zādul Ma'ād, Vol. II, p. 35:

قال ابن إسحق وقد علم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وقد نصارى نجران بالمدينة فحدثني محمد بن جعفر بن الزبير قال لما قدم وفد نجران علي رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم دخلوا عليه مسجدا بعد العصر فحانت صلاتهم فقاموا يصلون في مسجده فاراد الناس منعهم فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم دعوهم فاستقبلوا المشرق فصلوا صلاتهم -

"When a deputation from Najrān reached the Holy Prophet, they came to him in the afternoon while he was in the Mosque. Just then the time of their worship arrived; they stood up to hold their service in the Holy Prophet's Mosque. The people were about to prevent them from so doing, but the Holy Prophet said: 'Let them hold their service'; so they turned their faces eastward and began to perform their devotion in the Mosque."

Brinckman, in his Notes on Islam, has taken exception to the cases of the Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem and that of St. Sophia at Constantinople. But it introduces an historical discussion which we can ill-afford to take up here. Even granting that somebody is associated with the sacrilege of the above Mosques (though no Companion of the Holy Prophet is connected with the outrage referred to by Brinckman and the whole story is a fabrication), we shall say straight off that he made a mistake which does not detract anything from Islamic

teachings and the practice of the Holy Prophet, and which therefore affords no room for any objection against Islam.

Sale and Rodwell have incorrectly translated a portion of the verse under discussion. They have rendered the words: *اولئك ماكان لهم ان يدخلوها الا خائفين* as "Such men cannot enter them but with fear," whereas the correct rendering is "It did not behove such men or was not proper for them to enter them but with fear." The incorrect translation given by Sale and Rodwell has put quite a false meaning into the verse. These translators have committed quite a number of similar errors. The limit of space, however, forbids us to enter into a detailed discussion of them all; so in most cases we have contented ourselves with giving the correct translation only.

1. The word *وجه* *wajh* is used in various senses, of which the following three are applicable here: (1) face, (2) attention and (3) the thing itself.

According to the first meaning, the verse can be thus rendered:—"Whichever side ye turn, ye will find the face of God," i.e., He is All-seeing and All-knowing. According to the second acceptance of the term, the verse means "Whichever side ye turn, ye will secure the attention of God," i.e., divine succour will attend you. According to the third meaning, the verse may be translated:—"Whichever side ye turn, ye will meet with God Himself," i.e., God will be on your side."

The verse contains glad tidings of successful and prosperous days for the Muslims who were being unjustly persecuted, and who were subjected to virulent attacks from all sides, and even prevented from entering the *ka'bah*. And it is prophesied

As no distinctive defect of the Christian faith had yet been pointed out and they could advance a claim to the privilege of prophethood, so a grievous error of their faith is brought out. Without rhyme or reason they ascribe a son to God which doctrine is shocking to common sense. Thus the case of the Christians is made clear. They are guilty of

118
 الْأَرْضُ وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ۚ وَقَالَ

arḍ, wa idhā qaḍā amran fa inna mā yaqūlu la-hu kun fa yakūn. 119. Wa qālal-

118. The Originator of the heavens and the earth ; and "when He decrees a thing He does only say to it : ' Be ' and it is.'

that whichever side they turned their faces, God's succour would back them up and they would get the upper hand, although they were at that time oppressed and down-trodden. There was no occasion for them to feel downcast on account of the difficulties that stood in their way.

1. (vv. 117 & 118). Failing to attract converts from among the Jews, the followers of Christ turned their attention to the Romans and the Greeks. They began to colour their own faith in the views prevalent among those people and took to representing Christ as the son of God and began to preach Trinity. The Jewish idiom "son of God" used for Christ in the New Testament was employed as a convenient instrument for furthering the scheme. It was formed a basis for the Godhead of Jesus. But this was quite unjustifiable, because this idiom was used by the Jews in the sense of 'a beloved servant of God' or 'a prophet,' and it has been used at many places in the Bible for other men as well (*vide* Luke XX, 36 ; Math. V, 9, 45 & 48, Deut. XIV, 1 ; Ex. IV, 22 ; Galat. III, 26 ; Wisdom of Solomon II, 18). So it was only to win the sympathy of powerful European nations that an erroneous significance was put upon the term "son of God." The Holy Qur-ān explodes the theory in the strongest possible terms, and advances many arguments at various places. This verse also deals with this subject and has adduced a number of arguments to show the erroneousness of this dogma.

The FIRST argument is contained in the clause *سُبْحَانَہ* *subhānahu* 'Holy is He,' i.e., He is free from all defects; and to ascribe a son to Him is to admit certain defects in Him, because if the term "son" be used in its literal significance, it denotes one from the seed of another. So, if the word be applied to God in this sense, then the following three defects will have to be admitted in Him :—*First*, presence of sexual passion ; *secondly*, need for a wife ; *thirdly*, divisibility, because the son is a part of the father's body. Again, if the word has not been used in its literal meaning, Christ can not be considered as a partner in the Godhead, because real sonship alone can entitle him to Godhead. In short, the real sonship of Christ cannot be conceived, without attributing defects to God, which is contrary to reason and repulsive to

good sense ; and the figurative sense of the word fails to establish his Sonship. The belief in the 'Sonship' of Christ not only involves defects in God but also gives rise to the astounding theory that God is created and subject to death, because the presence of defects in a thing proves its liability to death. Another reason why the possession of a son includes God in the category of things subject to death is that propagation of species is the characteristic of perishable things. Those things which exist as long as there is need for them are free from propagation and procreation. As for instance man dies and leaves his offspring. Trees are subject to decay and propagate their kind. Animals are subject to death and are therefore equally subject to the law of procreation. On the other hand earth and other heavenly bodies are immune from death as long as they supply a need in the cosmos hence propagation and procreation are not among their characteristics. The possession of a son, in the real sense of the word, thus involves the idea of death in God.

The SECOND argument, as set forth in this verse against the theory of Sonship, is that God does not stand in need of a son, because all things belong to Him. Everything is His and so He does not stand in need of a son who would strengthen His hands

The THIRD argument against this notion is that man needs a son to help him in the management and control of his estate. For this purpose also God does not stand in need of a son, because everything that exists renders Him perfect obedience.

The view that God created a helper to manifest His power of creation becomes equally untenable in the light of the following words :

بَدِيعُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ -

i.e., He was never in need of any helper ; He is self-sufficient.

The FOURTH and the last argument deals with the theory held by some Christians that Jesus is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. God is the Creator, and His powers are boundless. He alone possesses the power of creation ; hence, the idea that He created Christ so that the latter might create the world is simply absurd.

setting up equals to God and have, therefore, forfeited their title to the promise given to the Israelites (vv. 117, 118).

الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ لَوْلَا يُكَلِّمُنَا اللَّهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَا آيَةٌ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ
الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ تَشَابَهَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا الْآيَاتِ
لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ۝ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَا تُسْأَلُ

ladhina lā ya'lamūna lau-lū yukal-limūna-lāhu au ta'tinā āyah; kadhālika, qālal-ladhina min qabli-him miṭhla qawli him; tashābahat qulubu hum; qad bayyannal-āyāti liqāumīn-yuqīnūn.

120. *Innā arsalnā-ka bil-ḥaqqi bashīra-wa-nadhīra-wa lū tus'alu*

119. And those who know not say, " 'Why does not Allāh speak to us, or a sign come to us?' Likewise said those before them according to their saying; alike are their hearts. Surely We have made the signs plain for the people who firmly believe.'

The word *بدع* *Badi'* (originator) requires some explanation. In the Arabic language *بدع* *bad'a-hū* means *انشاء و بدأ* *ansha'a-hū wa bad'a-hū*, i.e., 'He created something which did not exist before.' The word shows that Islam does not regard matter and soul as eternal and imperishable, but believes them to be created and therefore perishable.

1. A disputant foiled at every turn resorts to subterfuge and tries to evade the point at issue. He shifts his ground and often makes impossible demands. Prophets always encounter such people—people that will never be satisfied. At times, they demand things against the ways of God. Sometimes, their demand is imperative and unconditional and they urge that it should be satisfied immediately. At other times, again they demand things that are unworthy of God. To crown all these demands, they would often say why they were not overtaken with punishment, if they were in error. The Holy Prophet of Islam (on whom be peace and blessings of God) was no exception in this respect. In fact, the greatest of all the Prophets as he was, by far the greatest was the opposition he had to face. In the verse under discussion, two

specimens of the absurd demands made of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) are mentioned:—The first was that he should make God speak to all of them and tell them that he was a true Prophet. But never, in the time of any of the previous prophets, God spoke to each and every person. He does, of course, reveal the truth of the prophet to certain men, but not to all. The latter course would be against His ways. Those who make such demands do not care to profit by the evidence of those who receive direct information from God. If all men were to receive direct revelation from God about the truth of a prophet, it would become too manifest to leave room for any serious search for it, and thus the purpose of discrimination between the God-fearing and the wicked, for which the prophets are sent, would be defeated. So, the Holy Qur-ān points out in this verse that ignorant people, unacquainted with the ways of God and the conditions under which faith becomes useful, make a demand for a direct revelation from God, although this is the same demand as was made upon previous prophets also in whom they believe, but they did not comply with it. It was, therefore, unreasonable on their part to make the same demand from the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him). In fact, their hearts

Thereafter the following two of their objections are stated: If they were in error (1) why did not God warn them by revelation, (2) why did not God punish them? In reply, it is urged that similar objections were hurled against previous prophets too, and, if, at that time, it was done as they would have it done in their own case, then their demands were worth consideration. If the case was otherwise, their demand was a proof of their ignorance. Again, if their demands were rooted in a desire to ascertain the truth, a large number of signs had already been shown to prove the truth of the Holy Prophet and they were quite enough for those who were moved by a sincere desire to know the truth (v. 119). As to

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عَنْ أَصْحَابِ الْجَحِيمِ وَلَنْ تَرْضَى عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَى
 حَتَّى تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَى اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَى وَلَئِنْ اتَّبَعْتَ
 أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ

'an aṣḥābil-jahīm.

121. *Wa lan tarḍā 'ankal Yahūdū wa lan Naṣārā hattā tattabi'a millata hum; qul inna hudallāhi huwal hudā, wa la-inittaba'ta ahwā'a hum ba'dallaḥi jā'aka minal 'ilmi, mā laka minallāhi min-waliyyin-*

120. Verily, "We have sent thee with Truth, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner; and thou shalt not be called to account for the inmates of hell."

had become like those of the rejectors of the previous prophets; that was why similar demands occurred to them.

Secondly, they asked for a sign. In reply to this, God says that signs sufficient for the guidance of the right-minded have already been shown and they can profit by them, but there is no remedy for those who are obstinate and perverse.

It must be noted here that wherever in the Holy Qur-ān God speaks of an *āyat*, or a prophet or the believers are represented as speaking of an *āyat*, the word means 'a sign which serves to confirm the truth, whether it be in the form of a reward or punishment or something else. But when the unbelievers are represented as demanding an *āyat*, the word always conveys the meaning of punishment. It may parenthetically be noted here that the demand for sign in the shape of punishment seems to be an unchanging habit of the unbelievers. Even in this age, the opponents of the Promised Messiah constantly demanded of him, as a proof of his divine commission, to draw down on them the punishment of God, as if for them punishment were the only sign of the truth of a prophet. Many verses of the Holy Qur-ān clearly show that in the Quranic phraseology the word "*āyat*," whenever used in connection with the demands of the unbelievers, invariably means

a sign 'in the form of punishment (Vide XXI, 6-7; VI, 38-51; XIII 28-33; XX, 131-135).

In short, the unbelievers used the word in the sense of punishment and in this verse also the word signifies punishment. In response to the demand of the unbelievers, it is pointed out that the punishment they demanded was to ascertain the truth, and for this purpose signs had already been shown in abundance, which were sufficient to establish the truth of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God), if they were prepared to believe and were not actuated by prejudice and perverseness. It is further stated that they need not be impatient about the sign of punishment; that too will also come in due course.

1. In this verse, accepting their demand for a sign of punishment, God says that punishment is bound to visit those who refuse to believe in the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God), because like all other prophets he was the bearer of glad tidings for believers and a warner for unbelievers. Every student of history knows how clearly this prophecy was fulfilled. All the world witnessed the ruin of the Holy Prophet's adversaries, although worldly conditions and circumstances were in their favour and against the Holy Prophet.

their demand for punishment, it was destined to be fulfilled, but at its proper time. All the prophets are the bearers of glad tidings for the believers and warners for the unbelievers, similarly the Holy Prophet was also a warner for his opponents, who were sure to be visited by the wrath of God (v. 120).

وَلَا نَصِيرُ ۝ الَّذِينَ اتَّيْنَهُمُ الْكِتَابُ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ ۝

wa lā naṣīr 122. Alladhīna ātainā humul-kitāba yatlūna-hi ḥaqqā tilāwatih; ulā'ika

121. And the "Jews will by no means be pleased with thee, nor the Christians, until thou follow their creed. Say, verily Allāh's guidance alone is the guidance.¹ And verily ^b if thou follow their evil inclinations after what has come to thee of knowledge, there shall be for thee neither friend nor helper from Allāh.²

1. This verse sets forth the real cause of the difference of the Jews and the Christians from the Muslims, saying that they will not be pleased with the Muslims until the latter accept what the Jews and the Christians say. When these people, whose faith is only nominal and based on nothing except traditional prejudices, blindly stick to it and refuse to accept the truth, although it has been made clear to them, how can the Muslims who have been guided by God Himself and whose faith is the outcome of observations and experience desert the truth? So the Jews and the Christians are exhorted to give up nominal faith and accept what is the demonstrated truth, because the real guidance is that which is sent by God and not devised by one's own self.

2. Although the words, "If thou follow their evil inclinations," are apparently addressed to the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God), but they are really meant for his followers; and he has been addressed in order to emphasise the important fact that God is no respecter of persons; He does not care a bit for him who sets aside His commandments and follows his own whim, whoever he may be. Everybody, therefore, should be extremely cautious in this matter. By addressing the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings divine), God has indicated to the Muslims that when the warning extends to the Holy Prophet, it applies to others with still greater force; otherwise the Holy Prophet is infinitely above the possibility of transgressing against the divine commandments. God says about him :—

قل ان كنتم تحبون الله فاتبعوني يحببكم الله (آل عمران)

i.e. "Say, if ye love God, then follow me and God will love you" (III, 31). Similarly, God says :—

ولكم في رسول الله اسوة حسنة (احزاب) -

"There is a good model for you in the Prophet of God" (XXXIII, 22), i.e., if you wish to be good and pure, follow Him in thoughts, words, and deeds. These two verses clearly show that the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) was the ideal of manhood and was therefore far from following the wishes of Jews and Christians in the guidance he had directly received from God. Hence it is, that the warning, though in the first instance addressed to the Prophet himself, is really intended for his followers. There are in the Holy Qur-ān many verses which prove that sometimes, in giving an injunction, the Holy Qur-ān addresses the Holy Prophet when it is decidedly meant for his followers; as for instance, the Holy Qur-ān says : (بنی اسرائیل) i.e. "And do not even speak harshly to thy parents" (XVII, 24). Now it is known to everybody that the Holy Prophet lost his parents during his infancy, so although in the verse the Holy Prophet is addressed, yet it is intended for his followers. Nor is this mode of speech peculiar to the Holy Qur-ān. In the Bible we come across similar instances (*vide* Deut. XVIII, 21, 22).

At the end it is repeated that the real cause of their opposition to the Holy Prophet was no other than that his teachings were not in harmony with their desires; but having been guided by God it was impossible for the Holy Prophet to accommodate his teachings to their desires and whoever from among the Muslims after being guided leaned towards them would meet with punishment (v. 121). The Holy Qur-an adds that it was impossible that the class of sincere men

Ch. 14

ع

P. 14

122

يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ۝ يٰٓبَنِي إِسْرَٰءِيلَ

123

اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ۝

y'minūna bihi, wa maṇ-yakfur bihi fa-ulā'ika humul khāsirūn.

R. 15.

123. *Yā Banī Isrā'īl-adhkuru nī'matiyallati an'amtu 'alaikum wa annī faddaltu kum 'alal 'ālamīn.*

122. They to whom We have given the Book¹ follow it as it ought to be followed;² it is these that believe therein. And whoso believes not therein, these are they who would be the losers.

R. 15.

123. O ye children of Israel! remember "My blessing which I blessed you with, and that I^b exalted you above all peoples.*

1. This verse throws further light on the fact that the men really addressed in the previous verse are the Muslims. The verse says that it does not become a true believer to follow the vain fancies of the people when truth has dawned upon him. He should, on the other hand, follow the book that has proceeded from God and should not care for the public odium. Those who, having received the truth, would allow themselves to be duped by the unbelievers will come to grief. In the clause, "They to whom We have given the book," the people referred to are the Muslims and not the Jews or Christians, as the context clearly shows. قَادَہ

(Qatādah) one of the most eminent *Tabi'in* (immediate successors of the Holy Prophet's Companions) has also expressed identical views (*vide* Ibn-i-Kathir, p. 282, Vol. I).

2. That is, follow the Holy Qur-ān completely. The word تَلَا *talā* has been used in the same sense in the verse: — وَالْقُبْرَ إِذَا تَلَّهَا (وَالشَّمْسُ) — "By the moor when she follows the sun" (XCI, 3). Ibn-i-'Abbās 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud, 'Abdullah bin Omar, Ikrimah 'Atā, Mujāhid, Abu Razin and Ibrāhim Nakh'i, all support this interpretation.

who followed the Holy Qur-an should stoop so low as to alter the teachings of Islam to make them suit the unworthy desires of these people. The Muslims, on the other hand, were the true followers of the Holy Qur-an and it is they who were the true believers. Those who inclined to falsehood through hypocrisy and threw the injunctions of the Holy Qur-an into the background were not believers at all and did not deserve the rewards promised to the followers of the Holy Qur-an (v. 122).

To prove that the Jews had rendered themselves unfit for the favours of God, the Holy Qur-an has so far referred to those favours which God showed to them in the days of Moses, and side by side with the favours there are mentioned those acts of disobedience which they did after the receipt of those favours. Then the appearance of Jesus thirteen hundred years after Moses (*vide* Hutchinson's History of Nations) and their base attempt on his life is narrated so as to bring out the fact that for long centuries God had continued His favours to the Jews whereas they had persisted in their mischief and the fact is driven home to them that after this they could not expect any favour. Again to bring the charge home a vivid description is given of the religious life led by the Christians and the Jews of the Holy Prophet's days and it is clearly impressed how arrogantly they had behaved towards one who claimed to be the Messenger of God and how impiously they had treated him, all which clearly proved that they had become quite unworthy of the favour that a prophet should have been raised from among them, and that the measure of their mischief was so complete that they had by the time become unworthy of that favour of God. Here it may be urged by way of objection that the ill-treatment accorded to the Holy Prophet by the then Jews could not be made the basis of the universal indictment against the Jews that they had become for ever unfit for this gift, because some of the events related here refer to the time of the Holy Prophet. But it must be remembered that although these events occurred later, they throw a flood of light on the Jews of those days, hence as a further confirmation of pre-Islamic events those referring to the Holy Prophet's day have also been added. In short, after stating all these events, to draw attention to the fact that the subject in hand had come to a close, verse 41, with which it was commenced is repeated, pointing out thereby that God fulfilled His promises to the very letter and indeed exalted the Israelites over all the nations of the world (v. 123).

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَ
لَا تَنْفَعُهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ¹²⁴ ○ وَإِذْ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ

124. *Wattaqū yaumal-lā tajzī nafsun 'an nafsīn shai'an-wa lā yuqbalu minhū 'adlun-wa lā tanfa'u hū shafā'atun wa lā hum yunṣarūn.*

125. *Wa idhibtalā Ibrāhīma Rabbu hū bi-kalimātīn*

124 And fear the day "when a soul" shall not make satisfaction for a soul* at all,† nor shall any ^b ransom be accepted from it, nor any ^c intercession avail it. nor shall they be ^d helped.¹

*i.e., a person.

†Lit. even a bit.

1. In verse 49 this subject has already been dwelt upon, but on comparing it with this verse, three points of difference are noticed. *First*, in the former the word شَفَاعَاتٍ *shafā'at* (intercession) is put before the word عَدْلٍ *'adl* (ransom), whereas in the latter this order is reversed. The reason for this change is that, in his endeavour to save himself, it is natural for man to take, in the first instance, to the line of least resistance. This failing, he tries to adopt measures which cost him something. In other words, he has recourse to a recompense only when he finds that he cannot gain his end without offering it. So, in verse 49, this natural order is maintained and *Shafā'at* (intercession) is put before *'adl* (ransom). But after that verse many errors of the Israelites have been brought to light, especially their opposition to the prophets, so that now they could not rely much upon intercession, and naturally felt constrained to think of offering ransom. Hence, the order observed in the former is reversed in the latter verse. *Secondly*, in the former verse the words لَا يَرْخَدُ "shall not be taken" are used in connection with 'ransom,' while in the latter they have been replaced by the words لَا يَقْبَلُ "shall not be accepted." The reason for this change is to indicate their sense of extreme despair, يَرْخَدُ (*Yu'khadhu*) signifies "to take a thing, whether offered or not," while يَقْبَلُ (*yugbalu*) signifies "to accept a thing when offered." Thus *lā yugbalu* in the latter verse denotes that they

would desire that recompense be accepted from them but God would not accept it. *Thirdly*, in the former verse, the clause لَا يَقْبَلُ (shall not be accepted) is used in connection with "intercession," while in the latter, the clause لَا تَنْفَعُهَا (shall not avail) is substituted for it. لَا يَقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ *lā yuqbalu minhā shafā'atun* signifies, "intercession will not be accepted when an intercessor is produced," while لَا تَنْفَعُهَا *lā tanfa'u-hā shafā'atun*, which is more general in its application, signifies, "Intercession will not be of any avail to him even if somebody does of his own accord intercede for him." The reason for the change is that when the whole history of their misdeeds from beginning to end had been laid bare before the Israelites, they would not have the hardihood to request the prophets for intercession. But it might nevertheless be supposed that prophets would intercede for them even without their asking; hence the use of the words لَا تَنْفَعُهَا (shall not avail), which removes whatever hope they might have built upon this false supposition, for they are distinctly told that even if the prophets did intercede for them, their intercession would not be accepted. This and other verses, occurring in more than one place in the Holy Qur-ān with a slight change of words or order, are a standing testimony to the uniqueness of the Holy Qur-ān, for the slightest change in words or in the order of words, on careful reflection, reveals new shades of meaning and apt illustrations of human nature.

and in return what they did has also been clearly stated. The Israelites are in this way required to see for themselves and realise that under these circumstances they were not justified in holding that the Promised Prophet ought to have been raised from among them. Thus bringing them to the consciousness of their self-condemnation God calls upon them to desist from their gratuitous opposition to the Holy Prophet; for when the punishment of God visits the sinners, neither intercession nor any ransom can secure a reprieve (v. 124).

فَاتَّهَنُ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ

لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ¹²⁵ وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا

وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ

fa atamma-hunn; qāla innī jā'ilu-ka lin-nāsi imāmā; qāla wa minī dhurriyyatī, qāla lā yanālu 'ahdiḡ-ẓālimīn. 126. Wa idh ja'alnal-baita mathābatal-lin-nāsi wa amnā; wattakhidhu mim maqāmi Ibrāhīma muṣallā; wa 'ahidnā ilā Ibrāhīma wa Ismā'ila

125. And (remember) when his Lord 'tried' Abraham by certain commandments² which he fulfilled. He said, 'I will make thee 'a leader of men.'³ He said: 'And from among my posterity?' He said: 'My covenant embraces not the transgressors':

1. The word ابتلي *Ibtalā* implies two things: (1) "the learning the state, or the condition of the object, and becoming acquainted with what was unknown of the case thereof;" (2) "the manifesting of the goodness or badness of the object, both of these things being meant, and sometimes only one of them, as when God is the agent, in which case the latter is meant." (*Vide Lane's Arabic English Lexicon, Part I, p. 255*).

2. كلمات *Kalimāt*, "(certain) commandments," is the plural of كلمة *Kalimah*, and has been used in the Holy Qur-ān to express a variety of meanings. Here it means 'a commandment' (*Vide Mufridat-i-Rāghib*). The verse signifies that God gave many commandments to Abraham who carried out all of them to the very letter. In reward for this, God made him the leader of men and guide of nations.

3. إمام, *Imām* (leader) means:—

الموتم به انسانا كان يقتدي بقوله او فعله او كتابا -

i.e., "any object that is followed, whether a man or a book." (*Vide Mufridat-i-Raghib*).

In the verse under discussion, it is pointed out that when God made Abraham the leader of men and guide of nations, as a reward of his obedience to the divine commandments, he begged God to extend the same blessing into his progeny. But he was told that this covenant would not apply to the transgressors, *i.e.*, reformers would be raised from among his posterity but the transgressor would be excepted. The Bible does not give a detailed account of the event, but this much is clear from Gen. XVII, 9 & 10, that God promised to increase and bless Abraham's progeny and from verse 14 that this covenant was meant for those who might keep the commandments of God. This verse of the Holy Qur-ān seems to refer to the same covenant in clearer and more significant terms.

Again to remind the Jews that their deprivation of prophethood was in due conformity with the promise given to Abraham about his children, the covenant is repeated. It embodied a clear condition that such of Abraham's descendants as would be transgressors would be deprived of the promised rewards. (A brief reference to the covenant can also be found in Gen. XVII, 9-14, although the Holy Qur-an gives it in detail) (v. 125).

126
 أَنْ طَهَّرَ آيَاتِي لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ ۖ وَإِذْ قَالَ

an ṭahhira baiṭiya liṭṭā'ifina wal 'ākifina war-rukka'issujūd. 127. *Wa idh qāla*

126. And (remember) when ^a We made the house a resort for men¹ and a place of security.² And take ye the station of Abraham³ for a place of prayer. And ^b We commanded Abraham and Ishmael, 'Cleanse ye two My house for those who make the circuit and those who bow down and fall prostrate (in prayer).'

1. مَثَابَة (*mathābah*) signifies, "a place, a visit to which entitles one to reward, or a resort of men." (*Vide* Mufridāt-i-Rāghib, and the Arabic-English Lexicon by Lane).

2. امن (*amn* (security), means 'ease of mind and freedom from fear. (*Vide* Lane's Lexicon). The verse as a whole means that Mecca has been, since the days of Abraham, made a place of reward and the centre where nations meet and where individuals find satisfaction of mind and absence of fear. This covenant is not mentioned in the Bible, but the later events amply prove its existence. Though the truth of the first part of the covenant that it is a place of reward can only be recognised by the believers who have respect and regard for the place, yet the other part that it would be a resort for men, small or great, high or low, is a fact the truth of which cannot be denied even by the enemies of Islam. How did the Holy Prophet come to know beforehand that the place had been foretold to become a centre for men and nations and none could prevent the fulfilment of this prophecy? Had it been the word of man, it could scarcely have met with such grand and glorious fulfilment. For thirteen centuries, the truth of the Quranic word has been manifesting itself quite indisputably. Even now, when the whole of Europe, including Turkey, is engaged in a deadly warfare, the pilgrimage to Mecca goes on unchecked. Which is the place, we ask, which has been, by the unanimous consent of the belligerents, allowed to be open to visitors from all parts of the world. Is it not a wonder of wonders that the men enjoying the care and protection of the British Government, which is at war with Turkey, are freely allowed to go to Mecca which lies in the territories of the enemy. This wonderful phenomenon is an eloquent testimony to the truth of the words which were uttered some 1,300 years back

by the Greatest of Prophets (may peace and blessings of God be upon him).

Moreover, Mecca is declared in the prophecy to be a place of peace and security. The truth of this prophecy is also clear. During this long period of 1,300 years, mighty Empires have crumbled and large countries laid waste, but Mecca stands safe and secure against all invasions, and has thus ever proved a place of peace. Jerusalem, the sacred place of the Jews and the Christians, is in the hands of Muslims. Hardwar and Benares, the sacred places of the Hindus, were formerly in the hands of the Muslims and have now passed into the hands of the English. Similarly, Gaya, the sacred place of the Buddhists, was formerly under Muslims and is now under the English. But Mecca has ever been a place of peace. No alien conqueror has ever entered it. It never became a place of violence and bloodshed. It is true that on rare occasions there has been some feeble fighting, but the parties being Muslims refrained from interfering with the peace and security of the place on account of their reverence for it. Even in the present world-wide war, although the British Government is at war with the Turks, yet the immunity of the place is secured by a pledge on the part of the former and her allies to respect the sanctity of Mecca and other sacred places in Arabia and not to make them the fields of battle. This is also a clear sign that the hand of God is working from behind.

No doubt, from the Bible and the authentic traditions it is to be inferred that a nation will once march upon Mecca, but it is also related there that the invaders will be annihilated and meet with due punishment for their arrogance.

3. مقام ابراهيم (*Maqām-i-Ibrāhīm* (Station of Abraham) is a place near Ka'bah, where after

When the unfitness of the Israelites for prophethood has been proved, a question naturally arises: What nation would then be the rightful claimant to these favours. To answer this, the history of the building of the Ka'ba by Abraham and Ishmael is related so that it might become clear to all that in addition to the Israelites another line branched forth from Abraham and that Isaac had another brother, and it is added that Abraham had uttered, for the progress and pros-

إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ
 آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ
 أَضْطَرُّهُ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ¹²⁷ وَلَا ذِرْفَةً لَهُمُ الْقَوَاعِدُ
 مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ¹²⁸

Ibrāhīmu Rab-bi' al hūdhā baladan āminan-warzuq ahlahū minaththamarāti man āmana min hum billāhi wal yaumil ākhir; qūla wa man kafara fa umatt'uhū qalīlan thum-maḍṭarru hū ilā 'adhabin-nār, wa bi'sal-maṣīr.

128. *Wa idh yarfa'u Ibrāhīm-ul-qaww'ida minal baiti wa Ismā'il; Rabbanū taqabbal minnū, innaka antas-Samī'ul 'Alīm.*

**Lit. peace-giving.*

127. And (remember) when Abraham said, "My Lord, make this town a place of security,* and provide it with fruits for such of the dwellers thereof as believe in Allāh and the Last day.' He said: 'And on him too who believes not will I bestow goods for a little while; then will I drive him to the punishment of fire, and a vile destination it is.'

128. And (remember) when Abraham raised the foundations of the House,² and Ishmael too, saying 'O our Lord, accept it from us,³ verily Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing.

making circuits around the *Baitullah*, the pilgrims are enjoined to perform two *Rak'ats* of prayer. (While at prayers, a Muslim at first stands with his hands folded on the breast, then bows down and finally prostrates himself praying all the while in complete humility. This is called a *rak'at*). It seems that after completing the construction of Ka'bah, Abraham said a prayer there in token of his gratitude to God; and, to commemorate the same, the Muslims are required to say two *Rak'ats* of prayer there, whenever they make circuits round the Ka'bah.

1. How obedient and submissive the prophets are! When Abraham prayed to God to raise prophets from his children, God replied that the righteous would be made prophets, not the unrighteous. So when Abraham prayed the second time to God to grant plenty to the people of Mecca, he himself restricted his prayers to the good and the righteous dwellers of the place. Thereupon, God replied that He grants sustenance to all men, believers or unbelievers. The condition of faith need not be added in this case. Those who are wicked will be chastised for their mischief.

perity of the Ka'bah, fervent prayers which were also to bear fruit (vv. 126, 127). After this, the prayers which Abraham and Ishmael addressed to God while busy with the building of the sacred house are given, and they are to the effect that

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ
وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ رَبَّنَا

129. *Rabbanā waj'alnā mustimaini laka wa min dhurriyyati-nā ummatan muslimatal-laka, wa arinā manāsika-nā wa tub'alaina, innaka antat-Tawwū-bur-Rahim.* 130. *Rabba-nā*

129. 'And make us, our Lord, resigned to Thee, "and of our posterity, a people resigned to Thee. And show us our ^b ways of worship, and turn Thou to us with mercy; verily, Thou art the Compassionate, the Merciful.

2. Whether Abraham was the founder or only the renovator of the Ka'bah is a point that has given rise to much discussion. Some hold that Abraham was the builder of the place, others trace the origin of the house to the beginning of the world, and hold that Abraham only re-built it on its ruins. The Holy Qur-ān and the authentic traditions favour the view that, prior to the erection of a building on this site by Abraham, some sort of structure did exist. In the Holy Qur-ān we read about the *Baitullah*: *اول بيت وضع للناس* i.e. "The first house founded for mankind," (III, 97), i.e., the first house of worship on the surface of the earth was the one at Mecca.

Moreover, there is in the Holy Qur-ān a prayer which Abraham uttered at the time of separating from Ishmael and his mother at Mecca. It runs thus:—

ربنا اني اسكنت من ذريتي بواد غير ذي زرع عند
بيتك المحرم -

"O God; I have made one of my sons live near Thy house in a valley where there is no vegetation. (XIV, 38). From this verse it is clear that the ka'bah existed before Abraham. The traditions of the Holy Prophet too (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) support this view. As for instance, describing the retreat of Abraham after leaving Hagar and her son at Mecca, the Holy Prophet is reported to have said:—

فقلت يا ابراهيم اين تذهب و تتركنا بهذ الوادي الذي
ليس فيه انيس ولا شئ فقلت له ذالك مرارا وجعل
لا يلتفت اليها فقلت الله امرى بهذا قال نعم - قالت
اذا لا يضيعنا ثم رجعت فانطلق ابراهيم حتي اذا كان
عند ثنية حيث لا يرونه استقبل بوجهه البيت ثم دعا

بهذه الدعوات ورفع يديه فقال ربنا اني اسكنت من
ذريتي بواد غير ذي زرع عند بيتك المحرم -

i.e., "Hagar inquired from Abraham why he was leaving them in a valley without any friend or sympathiser and any food to eat. She asked the same question several times, but he kept silent and returned no answer. At last, she asked whether he was doing this under the orders of God. Abraham replied in the affirmative. Thereupon, Hagar said that in that case God would never let them perish." (Contrast this faith with that of Sarah who smiled at the promise of God and doubted it and then tried to conceal her doubt by means of a mis-statement). Then he returned, and standing on a hillock, where he could not be seen by Hagar, he turned his face to the Ka'bah, extended both of his hands, and uttered the prayer: 'O God! I have made one of my sons live near Thy house,' etc. (*vide Bukhūrī*). This narrative related by the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) shows that even before Abraham's going there, the place was held sacred, or else how could he have turned his face to it while uttering the prayer? Nor does history say anything contrary to this view, because whatever information can be gleaned from it points to the fact that the Ka'bah is a very old place. Even men like Sir W. Muir have admitted that the Ka'bah has been held as particularly sacred from times immemorial.

3. This prayer brings out the very important point that even the righteous stand in need of constant prayer for the consecration of their good deeds by God, because however noble and righteous the deeds appear to be, they very often lead to evil consequences.

the children of Abraham on the side of Ishmael might also increase and there be raised among them a Prophet whose

وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ

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وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ۝ وَمَنْ يَّرْ غَبُ

wab'ath fi-him rasulam-min-hum yatlu'alat-him ayatika wa yu'allimu humul-kitaba wal hikmata wa yuzakki him; inna ka antal 'Azizul-Hakim. R.16. 131. Wa man-yarghabu

130. 'And raise up among them, our Lord! a Messenger from among themselves, who may read to them Thy signs and teach them the Book and Wisdom and may purify them; verily Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.'

1 Explanations of important words:—

آيَات *āyāt*, plural of آية (*āyat*), "a sign, token, or mark by which a person or thing is known; it properly signifies any apparent thing inseparable from a thing not equally apparent, so that when one perceives the former, he knows that he perceives the other, which he cannot perceive by itself, when the two things are of one predicament; and this is apparent in the object of sense and that of intellect." (Lane's Lexicon, Part I).

كتاب (*Kitāb*) "law" or "writing" (Muntahal-İrb).

حكمة (*hikmat*), "what prevents from ignorant behaviour; knowledge or science; knowledge of the true nature of things; an action according to the requirements thereof; the perfecting of the human mind by the acquisition of the speculative

sciences, and of the complete faculty of doing excellent deeds, according to the ability possessed; the attainment of that which is true or right by knowledge or by deed; acquaintance with the most excellent of things by the most excellent kind of knowledge; equity or justice in judgment or judicial decision; forbearance or clemency" (Lane's Lexicon, Part II).

يُزَكِّيهِمْ (*Yuzakki-him*) comes from تَزَكَّى (*Tazkiyah*) which means 'to purify or increase.' (Lane's Lexicon, Part III).

Explanation of the verse.—Christian critics question the truth of the events related in the above note on the flimsy ground that the Bible is silent about them. It is not difficult to see the absurdity of this objection. There is no denying the fact that the story of Abraham's leaving his wife Hagar and his son Ishmael in a desert is to be found in Genesis.

four-fold mission was thus set forth:—(1) To enlighten mankind on the principles of religion based on the soundest of arguments. (2) To teach them the Book. (3) To infuse into them spiritual wisdom. (4) To cleanse and purify them (vv. 128, 129, 130).

In giving these prayers, an allusion is made to the fact that Abraham did not only pray for the progress and prosperity of the children of Isaac, but also for the posterity of Ishmael, so when the offspring of Isaac lost the gift of prophethood on account of their evil-doings, next to them the descendants of Ishmael were the rightful heirs to it and thus the expected Prophet must belong to the house of Ishmael. It will not be out of place to mention here that in order to prove that after the sons of Isaac, the prophet should belong to the sons of Ishmael, the Holy Qur-an speaks of the construction of the Ka'bah and the prayers uttered by Abraham for the sons of Ishmael. To this some Christian critics generally bring forward two objections:—(1) It is not found in the Bible whether God had made any promise to Abraham concerning Ishmael. (2) Admitting that God had made a promise even about the children of Ishmael, there is no proof that the Holy Prophet was descended from Ishmael. An exhaustive answer to these objections necessitates a detailed discussion for which we cannot find space here; but for the purpose of indicating the connected order of the verses, a brief reference is necessary. To dispose of the first objection that there is found no promise to the sons of Ishmael in the Bible story, first, we turn to the Bible itself and see that the sons of Isaac entertained hatred against the prophet Ishmael and his descendants. The reason for this is obvious. One of the wives of Abraham, Sarah, from whom the children of Isaac were descended hated Ishmael and his mother Hagar. So it was only natural that the children of Sarah should have inherited from her hatred for Ishmael and his family. Under these circumstances it is idle to search for any express prophecy in favour of Ishmael and his progeny in the Bible which has for a long time been subjected to human interference; and the lack of mention in it of the prophethood of Ishmael and some of his descendants cannot be considered as anything like a testimony against the claims of Ishmaelite line. If the Biblical evidence can be taken to establish the existence of a promise given to the sons of Isaac, there is decidedly no reason why the evidence of the Holy Qur-an must not be accepted to establish the fact that great promises were held out by God to the sons of Ishmael also. Another answer to this objection is that the Bible does contain clear references to the fact that rich rewards were reserved for the progeny of Ishmael too. We find the same words used in the Bible for the children of Ishmael as for those of Isaac. Just as there is a promise for the growth and domination of the sons of Isaac (Gen. XVII, 16), similarly there is a promise for the increase of the sons of Ishmael and for the raising of twelve princes from among them (Gen. XVII, 20). Hence the kind of reward

EXPLANATORY NOTES—continued.

Moreover, want of water, the extreme thirst of the boy and the providential appearance of a well are also mentioned (Gen. XXI, 14-19). The very fact that mention is made in the Bible of the sufferings which Hagar and her son underwent after Abraham had departed from them clearly proves that Abraham used to go to see them. As the Bible gives an extremely brief account of Ishmael's life, so much so that little or nothing is said of his youth or the rest of his days, it is, therefore, unsafe to decide the matter on the authority of the Bible. Moreover, it is clearly seen from that Book that the sons of Israel looked upon the sons of Ishmael as their enemies. Therefore, far from preserving any record of the life of Ishmael, the Israelites were more likely to delete such mention of Ishmael as might already have been contained in the Bible. At any rate, the Christians have no historical ground to reject the narrative of the Holy Qur-ān, especially when the well-known chronicles of Arabia con-

firm it. Some of the Christian writers, like Capt. Burton, Dr. G. W. Freytag, and the Rev. J. M. Rodwell, have felt constrained to admit that the story of the Qur-ān and the Traditions is true or, at least, highly probable.

In the verse under discussion, attention is drawn to a prayer uttered by Abraham to the effect that God might raise from the Meccans a Prophet who should (1) lay before the people arguments carrying conviction into their minds, (2) teach them the law of God, (3) initiate them into the philosophy of divine commandments; because until the necessity of a commandment is brought home, one does not feel disposed to attend to it, but rather looks upon it as a burden, as was the case with the Christians who, unable to understand the underlying principles of the Mosaic Law, began to call it a curse (*vide* Romans IV, 15; Galatians III, 13); and (4) hallow the life of men.

granted to the children of Isaac will have to be admitted for the children of Ishmael as well. If it be urged that in verse 21 of the same chapter it is written that God will establish His covenant with Isaac, which shows that the prophets would be raised from among the children of Isaac, even then nothing can be affirmed against the case of the sons of Ishmael, because even before Isaac was born God had made a covenant with Abraham saying "This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between Me and you and the seed after thee, every man child among you shall be circumcised and it shall be a token of covenant between Me and you (Gen. XVII, 10, 11). Now we know that Abraham had Ishmael circumcised. If the promise had been restricted to Isaac and his progeny, Abraham would have circumcised himself, because the promise was given to him, and also his slaves because circumcision was ordered for them, and again he would have Isaac circumcised because the covenant was to be established with him. Now the question is, Why was Ishmael circumcised at the age of 13. The only possible answer is that he was also to share the covenant. The circumcision of Ishmael leaves no room for doubt that Ishmael was among that progeny of Abraham with whom the covenant was to be established. Besides, it is seen that circumcision has always been in vogue among the posterity of Ishmael which goes to prove that the order for it was meant not for Ishmael alone, but for his posterity too. It is now beyond dispute that the covenant was intended for the children of Ishmael quite as much as for the children of Isaac. As regards the significance of the verse 21, read in conjunction with others it can be understood to imply (if it is indeed a part of the revealed scripture and has not been tampered with by the children of Isaac to suit their own ends) that this everlasting covenant *would begin with Isaac* as was really the case. As the covenant which God made with Abraham was first to be fulfilled in Isaac's progeny, so God said that He would establish His covenant with Isaac. The verse is capable of no other interpretation.

Coming to the second objection that admitting the covenant to include the sons of Ishmael as well, it is yet for the Muslims to prove that the Holy Prophet of Islam belonged to the house of Ishmael. We should like to remind our critics that the only positive proof for the descent of a certain nationality from a certain individual is to be found in the traditions of that community. No more proof for the connection of so many different communities of the world with their respective progenitors is needed than the traditional statement of the communities themselves. The origin of races is invariably decided on their own testimonies; so there is no reason why the same rule should not be allowed to hold good in the case of the Arabs and why their own statement should not be accepted as a conclusive testimony about their Ishmaelite extraction. Even before the inception of Islam, the Quraish believed and declared themselves with a singular unanimity to be descendants of Ishmael, and their claims to Ishmaelite descent were recognized throughout the length and breadth of Arabia. They had even an idol of Ishmael set up in the Ka'bah. There is no room, therefore, to entertain even the slightest doubt as to the Ishmaelite descent of the Quraish. Ishmael was not so great a man from the worldly point of view as to stimulate in the Quraish a desire to share his greatness by associating themselves with him. In short, such an old claim of a community cannot be set aside, especially when no incentive to the fabrication of a falsehood can be traced in the entire history of the community. Moreover, what goes to establish the Ishmaelite descent of the Quraish beyond any semblance of doubt is the simple fact that if the Quraish had falsely assumed their consanguinity with Ishmael, the real descendants would have strongly protested against such a false claim; but no such objection is known to have been ever raised. Furthermore, we find written in Gen. XVII: And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee; be bold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation." If the Quraish are not his descendants, where is the promised great nation? The prophecy demands that the nation be known and recognized; otherwise the prophecy will be meaningless. The only claimants in the field, are the Quraish and some other Arab tribes, and the case cannot but be decided in their favour. Nor is an external evidence wanting to their Ishmaelite lineage. About a century before the birth of the Holy Prophet of Islam (on whom be peace and blessings of God) Narsai, a Christian writer said, "The raid of the sons of Hagar was more cruel, and the blow that they gave was more sore than disease; the wound of the sons of Abraham is like the venom of a serpent, and perhaps there is remedy for the poison of reptiles but not for theirs—let us always blame the foul inclination of the sons of Hagar, and specify the people (the tribe) of Quraish who are like animals." (Leaves from Three Ancient Qur-ans, edited by Rev. Alphonse Mingana, D.D., Introduction XIII). A perusal of these words is enough to convince every reader that it was not only in the days of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) that the Quraish laid claim to Ishmaelite descent; on the other hand, so old was the claim that even a century before the birth of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) their descent from Hagar was recognised even by their bitterest enemies. In short, Ishmaelite descent of the Quraish cannot be denied. If the erroneous principle of discarding the traditional claims of communities to their several origins be observed, then surely critics will as well be within their rights to question the claims of the Jews to their descent from Isaac and set it aside as an assumption incapable of proof. To sum up, both

عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدْ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَأَنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ¹³¹ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ
أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ¹³² وَوَصَّى بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ

'am-millatī Ibrāhīma illā man safiha nafsah; wa la qadis-ṭafainā hu fid-dunyā, wa innā hu fil-ākhiratī la minas-ṣālihin.

132. *Idh qāla la hū Rabbu hū aslim, qāla aslam-tu li Rabbil 'ālamīn.*

133. *Wa wassā bihā Ibrūhīmu banī hi wa Ya'qūb;*

R. 16.

131. And who turns away from "the religion of Abraham, but he who has lost himself? and verily We chose him in this world, and in the next he is surely one of the righteous."¹

132. When his Lord said to him: 'Be resigned,' he said, 'I am resigned to the Lord of the worlds.'²

1. The meaning of سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ as given in the Lisānul-'Arab Vol. XVII, p 391, is اهلك نفسه i.e., 'he ruined or destroyed himself.' The verse means that the accepted patriarch of the people of the Book as Abraham is, anybody who departs from his way ruins his own soul. He was great from worldly as well as religious points of view. His religion, therefore, leads to salvation, and defection from it leads to destruction.

2. Abraham's religion is described in this verse. When God asked him to be obedient and submissive, he replied لرب العالمين i.e., "I surrender myself completely to the Lord of the worlds." So deferential was he to the will of God that when God ordered obedience, Abraham did more than obey; he resigned himself entirely to God.

the objections are absolutely unfounded and there is no denying that the covenant included the children of Ishmael as well, and that the Holy Prophet of Islam (on whom be peace and blessings of God) belonged to the house of Ishmael.

After referring to the fact that when the sons of Isaac were declared unworthy of the gift of prophethood, it was the turn of the sons of Ishmael to enjoy the gift, the attention of the Jews and Christians is called to the point that when it has been proved that in accordance with the promise of God, a Prophet was to appear from among the children of Ishmael, it is therefore all the more incumbent upon them to ponder over the claims of this Prophet and not to go against the religion of Abraham who accepted all revelations that were sent by God (vv. 131, 132). It is further pointed out that

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يٰۤاَيُّهَا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ اصْطَفٰ لَكُمْ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَتَوَكَّنْ اِلَّا وَاَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ط

Yābanniyya innallā-hastafā lla kumud-dīna faʾlā tamūtunna illā wa antum muslimūn.

133. And upon his sons did Abraham—also Jacob—enjoin this :^a ‘O, my sons, verily, Allāh has chosen for you this religion ; die not, then, but while ye are resigned.’

1. Both Abraham and Jacob exhorted their respective offsprings to the same surrender to the will of God, and bade them present to God that attitude of unreserved resignation which was the characteristic of their own lives. They advised their children to let no moment of their life pass without bearing witness to their total submission to the will of God. This and the foregoing verse reveal the noteworthy point that Islam really means absolute obedience and self-surrender. Hence, one who completely obeys the will of God is a Muslim. Thus, every true pre-Islamic religion will, within this meaning of the term, fall under the definition of Islam, because at that time to follow it was to obey the then expressed will of God. When one faith is replaced by another, the latter will be entitled to the name of Islam, and its followers Muslims. The point of difference between the religion brought by the Holy Prophet and other faiths is that, though Islamic in essence, the latter were not called by the name ‘Islam,’ whereas the former is given no other name than *Islam*. The reason for this distinction between the Holy Prophet's faith and the previous ones is that they were not perfect and each of them was to be replaced by a succeeding one, and so, if each had been entitled Islam, there would have been hopeless confusion. Hence, when there came the faith which was perfect in itself and was, therefore, to last forever, it was aptly called Islam, so that the name itself may be sufficiently illustrative of its purpose

Unable to understand this point, the Rev. Dr. Wherry has raised an objection against Islam in his Commentary. He supposes that when the Qur-ān calls the previous prophets as Muslims, it means that they followed the religion of the Prophet of Islam. Then he proceeds to prove the futility of this view by saying that it is not substantiated by the evidence of the previous scriptures. He lays so much stress upon this objection that, according to him, this one point alone is sufficient to crush the whole fabric of Islam. We cannot help pitying

the Rev. gentleman. The Holy Qur-ān does not mean that the previous prophets followed the ordinances embodied in the Holy Qur-ān, but it means that, as explained above, they followed the true faith of their day. Although details were, from time to time, undergoing changes according to the needs of the age, yet the followers of every revealed book were Muslims because they were obedient to the then commandments of God. The baselessness of the Rev. Dr. Wherry's objection can be further exposed by an illustration. A king may speak of a deceased servant of his as obedient and submissive, though rules and regulations might have, since his death, undergone several modifications and amendments. A man like our critic is apt to question the opinion of the king regarding the obedience of the servant on the ground that he did not obey the changed laws enacted after his death. No sane person will agree to this objection. The deceased servant obeyed all the rules of his day, and, therefore, deserved to be called obedient. Thus, every prophet and his followers were ‘Muslims’ on account of their complete submission to the then revealed will of God.

It is really amazing that men, so awfully ignorant of Islamic teachings, should undertake to write commentaries on the Holy Qur-ān. Not one out of these translators knows the correct translation of the Holy Qur-ān and is able to grasp the true tenor of it. Coupled with this hopeless poverty of knowledge is the tremendous wealth of invective which they employ against the Holy Book and the Holy Prophet of Islam (on whom be peace and blessings of God) without the least regard for the feelings of millions of their adherents. The whole Christendom will run wild with excitement if similar language is used of Christ and his disciples. Forgery, falsehood, imposture and other similar words are unreservedly, and quite unblushingly, used for Islam and its Holy Founder (on whom be peace and blessings of God) by these pious critics who forget even the elementary principles of humanity and courtesy while dealing with Islam.

Abraham not only himself followed that principle but also exhorted his offspring to adhere to the same course of obeying the behests of God whenever received (v. 133). Accordingly the sons of Jacob promised to him to worship the one

أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتُ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ
 مِنْ بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَاللَّهُ أَبَايَكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَ
 إِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا ۖ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ۝ تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ
 لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَنْ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝

134. *Am kuntum shuhadā'a idh haḍara Ya' qūbal-mautu, idh qāla li banī hi Mā tā' budūna mim ba'di; qālū na' budu ilāha ka wa ilāha ābā'ika Ibrāhima wa Ismā'ila wa Ishāqa ilāhan-wāhidan-wa nahnu la hū muslimūn.*

135. *Tilka ummatun qad khalat, la hū mā kasabat wa la kum mā kasab-tum, wa lā tus'alūna 'ammā kānū ya'malūn.*

134. Were ye present when death approached Jacob? When he said to his sons, 'What will ye worship after me'? They said, 'We will worship thy God, and the God of thy fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, the one God; and to Him are we resigned.'

135. This was a people that "has passed away; for them is what they earned, and for you shall be what ye earn, and ye shall not be questioned as to what they did."

1. There is no reason to doubt that Jacob made his sons promise that they would adhere to the worship of the one God. It is clear from the book of Moses that, from the beginning of the world down to the days of Moses, all the prophets preached the worship of one God and denounced idol-worship and idol-worshippers. The doctrine of Trinity was imported into Christianity from the Romans and subsequently fathered upon the Old Testament by turning and twisting the simple import of the text. Rodwell quotes the following passage from Midr. Rabbah on Gen. XLIX, 2: "At the time when our father Jacob quitted this world, he summoned his twelve sons and said to

them, Hearken to your father Isaac (Gen. XLIX, 2) Have ye any doubts in your hearts concerning the Holy One, blessed be He! They said, Hear, O Israel, our father. As there is no doubt in thy heart, so neither is there in ours. For the Lord is our God, and He is one." Cf. also Targ. Jer. on Deut. VI, 4.

2. Men generally are apt to think that the deeds of their forefathers will stand them in good stead. The Holy Qur-ān negatives this view, by saying: Their deeds were for them, and yours will be for you. You will be questioned about your own, and not your ancestors' actions.

true God and show complete obedience to Him. Then the Jews and Christians are reminded that those people reaped the reward of their deeds, and if they also wished to be rewarded like them, they should show implicit obedience to God's will and take no pride in the obedience shown by their forefathers (vv. 134, 135).

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تَهْتَدُوا قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
 حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ¹³⁶ قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا
 وَمَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ

136. *Wa qūlu kūnū Ḥudān au Naṣārā tahtādū, qul bal millata Ibrūhima hanīfa; wa mā kāna min-al-mushrikīn.*

137. *Qulū āmannū billāhi wa mā unzila ilainā wa mā unzila ilū Ibrūhima wa Ismū'ila wa Ishāqa wa Ya'quba, wal-asbāṭi*

136. And they say : " 'Be ye Jews or Christians that ye may be guided' Say : 'Nay, but the religion of Abraham, the upright ;' and he was not of those who associate gods with Allāh ' "

1. The followers of all the religions of the world have a tendency to drift into the notion that salvation is confined to their respective folds, to the entire exclusion of all others : But this view is quite erroneous. Salvation depends upon the grace of God, and surrender to His will is the only way to win His grace. Accordingly, so long as following a religion involves submission to God's will, there is salvation in it. But when the former condition ceases to exist, the religion can no more offer salvation. God says in this verse that the Jews and the Christians are quite wrong in emphasizing the condition of bare entry into their religions as the means of salvation. Abraham, who was a righteous servant of God, would always put implicit faith in every commandment received from God. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the followers of all such religions as claim to have fulfilled in themselves the covenant of Abraham to accept the commandments of God and place no reliance upon any denomination. Abraham hated setting up equals with God and worshipped Him alone. Now, the Jews and the Christians have departed from the way of Abraham in so far as they have set up false god's in various ways. The Jews look upon the words of their

divines as the words of God, and this is doubtless paying to others allegiance which is due to God. Christians hold Christ and the Holy Ghost as partners in the Godhead, although the teachings of Abraham even as represented in the Bible of to-day, do not justify the holding of such a dogma. If Jesus and the Holy Ghost had anything of Godhead in them, they must have been the same at the time of Abraham. But Abraham is found to have always worshipped the one true God called the *Father* in the terminology of Christian theology, and there is no mention of any other God in his teachings.

For want of an appropriate English equivalent, we have rendered the word حَنِيف (ḥanīf), occurring in this verse, as 'upright,' which but too poorly represents the idea expressed by this word. *Hanīf* really means 'one who steadily follows the right faith and never swerves from it.' Abul Qulābah, who is a great commentator on the Holy Qur-ān and who is among the *Tābi'in* (immediate successors of the Holy Prophet's companions) says that حَنِيف ḥanīf means 'one who believes in all prophets, rejecting none of them (vide Ibn-i-Kathīr, p. 325). This meaning is also borne out by the next verse.

They are further advised to give up the extravagant notion that salvation was impossible except by becoming Christians or Jews. They are also required to follow in the footsteps of Abraham who was not among those who set up equals to God, i.e., he cared for the commandments of God above everything else (v. 136). Then the Muslims are required

وَمَا أَوْتِيَ مُوسَى وَعِيسَى وَمَا أَوْتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ
 بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ¹³⁷ فَإِنْ آمَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا
 آمَنَتْكُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ أَهْتَدَ وَاءٍ وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ

wa mā ūtiya Mūsā wa Isā wa mā ūtiyan-nabiyyūna mir-Rabbi-him, lā nufarriqu baina aḥadim-min hum wa nahnu la hū muslimūn.

138. *Fa in āmanū bi-mithli mā āman-tum bi-hi fa-qadihtadau, wa in tawallau fa-inna-mā hum fi shiqāq,*

137. Say ye: "We believe in Allāh and what has been sent down to us, and what was sent down to Abraham and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob and his children,¹ and what was given to Moses and Jesus, and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them;² and to Him are we resigned (Muslims) '³

1. سبط *Sabt* means 'extension,' hence 'long hair' is called *sabt*, and a generous person is called *sabtul-kaffain* (سبط الكفين), because his helping hand *extends* to every needy person. The grandson is also called *sibt* (سبط) because his birth means *increase* of progeny. In a still wider sense, the word might signify "progeny." It is in this extended sense that the word has been used in this verse.

2. This sentence means that the Muslim makes no difference between the prophets in respect of their prophethood. He believes all that was sent to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and other prophets from among their descendants, including Moses and Jesus, to be from God and believe in the truth of all these prophets and those who appeared in other lands. He neither rejects the prophethood of any prophet, nor holds any nation to be without a prophet.

This verse should not be construed to mean that

all the prophets are of the same spiritual rank, because in this very *Surah* we read:—

تلك الرسل فضلنا بعضهم على بعض -

"We have granted superiority to some of the prophets over others" (v. 254). So the words "We make no distinction between any of them" do not imply that we believe all the prophets to be of equal rank, but that we draw no distinction between them in point of prophethood, believing in some and rejecting others.

Christian critics have objected to this verse and demanded proof of the prophethood of Ishmael. If they think over the matter, the same objection will apply to their own case. What proof is there of the prophethood of Isaac? If they reply that Moses, whose truth has been established by cogent arguments, has testified to the truth of Isaac, we can say, with equal positiveness, that the Holy Prophet, whose truth has been established by even sounder arguments, has testified to the truth of Ishmael. If

not to mind their (the Jews' the Christians') adhering to, or deviating from, the religion of Abraham, but always to confess to the fact that they (the Muslims) believed in all that was revealed from God (v. 137). If, like the Muslims, the people of

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فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ

fa sa yakfi ka humullāhu, wa huwas-Samī'ul 'Alīm.

139. *Sibghatallāhi, wa man*

138. And ^a if they believe according to that which ye have believed, then are they surely guided; and if they turn back, then are they only in a schism. In that case ^b Allāh will surely suffice thee against them, for He is the Hearing, the Knowing.¹

the testimony of the Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) cannot be accepted as a proof of Ishmael's prophethood, there is surely no reason why Moses' testimony be taken for granted as a proof of Isaac's prophethood. As a matter of fact, our Christian critics have no grounds on which to reject Ishmael as a prophet, except that the Bible does not speak of him as such. But this is surely no ground for their rejection, because we learn from the Bible that through Sarah's envy he had to leave his home, and as he went away from the Israelites to a far-off country, it was not possible for him to find mention in the Bible. The absence of an event in the Bible narrative does not certainly prove the non-occurrence of it. It is an admitted logical axiom that non-mention of a thing is no proof for its non-existence. But it must also be remembered that even the Bible is not without clear evidences to show that God made great promises to Abraham about Ishmael. His very name which, according to the Bible, was given to him by an angel and which means 'God hears' (Gen. XVI, 11) indicates that he was to be a beloved servant of God. We read in the Bible that Abraham prayed to God, saying "O that Ishmael might live before Thee" (Gen. XVII, 18). And God replied: "And as for Ishmael I have heard thee; behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation" (Gen. XVII, 20). Read together, the verses show that Abraham prayed to God that He make Ishmael a righteous servant of His. The words "that Ishmael might live before thee" cannot bear any meaning except that 'he may be good and godly.' If the words had signified something else, it would have been sufficient for Abraham to say, "O that Ishmael might live," because all living men live before God and not outside His realm. Hence, the addition of the words "before Thee" to the word "live" on the part of Abraham clearly points to the conclusion that Abraham entreated God to grant Ishmael a godly life and admit him into His kingdom, elevating him to the dignity of a prophet, and God accepted Abraham's prayer. The original Hebrew

יְהִי לְפָנַי translated into English as "live before Thee" also confirms the above view,

because in Hebrew, פָּנַי means to be under

one's eyes and become one's favourite. (*vide* Hebrew and English Lexicon, by Edward Robinson, D.D., pp. 533, 830 and 831, Ed. 1836).

3. This verse throws further light on the meaning of the word *Muslim*. A *Muslim* is one who believes in *all* the prophets of God, known as well as unknown, that is, he believes that all nations were blessed with prophets and holds them all as true and regards their teachings as the word of God. Thus, one who believes in the prophet of his own day and those gone before, without rejecting any, is a *Muslim*, because after making the Muslims declare that they believe in all the prophets, God has made them say that they are *Muslims*.

Be it said to the honour of Islam that it is the only religion which recognises the prophets of all countries and nations, whereas all other faiths recognise prophethood only in their own exclusive spheres. The Holy Qur-ān has specifically mentioned the names of only those prophets who were known to those to whom Islam was immediately preached and, as regards others, it says comprehensively "No nation has gone before without receiving a warner" (XXXV, 25).

We draw the attention of the Muslims to the fact that, within the meaning of this verse, a Muslim is one who believes in *all* prophets. The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) called the *Promised Messiah* a prophet, and the previous prophets also spoke of him as a prophet. When God has fulfilled in the person of Mirzā Ghulam Ahmad the promise of the second Messiah, it behoves every one who identifies himself with Islam to accept him, because denial of the Messiah is sure to deprive one of the blessings of Islam. God has commanded the Muslims to believe in all the prophets and He has sent the Promised Messiah as a prophet. His prophethood cannot, therefore, be treated as an exception to the general command of God.

1. That is, if the Jews and the Christians agree with the Muslims in holding that religion is no

the Book also accepted all the revelations of God, they would be blessed; otherwise they would be punished (v. 138). The

أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً زَوْنَحْنُ لَهُ عِيدُونَ¹³⁹ قُلْ أَتُحَاجُّونَنَا فِي
 اللَّهُ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ وَلَنَّا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ
 مُخْلِصُونَ¹⁴⁰ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ

aḥsanu minallāhi sibghatan-wa nahnu la-hū 'ābidūn.

140. *Qul a-tuḥājjuna-nā fillāhi wa hurwa Rabbu-nā wa Rabbu kum, wa la nā a'mālu nā wa la kum a'mālu kum, wa nahnu la hū mukhlisun.*

141. *Am taqūlūna inna Ibrāhīma wa Ismā'ila wa Ishāqa wa Ya'qūba*

139. Take the dye of Allāh, and who is better than Allāh at dyeing, and Him alone do we worship.¹

140. Say: "Dispute ye with us concerning Allāh, while He is our Lord and your Lord? And for us are our deeds, and for you your deeds; and to Him alone are we sincerely devoted."²

hereditary or traditional matter, but it consists in believing in all revealed guidance, they are on the right path; otherwise, they are in the matter of religion separate from the Muslims and there is a wide gulf between their religion and Islam.

"It is proper for you to accept the religion of God or to dye yourself in the dye of God," i.e., follow the path which God wishes you to tread, as nothing can be better; and receive baptism from God Himself.

2. Most of the nationalities lay great stress on their claims to the monopoly of the grace of God, thinking that others are entirely deprived of it, and that all the prophets must therefore belong to their community. In this verse God points out the folly of their view, saying that God is the Creator of all and His grace is not confined to any one tribe or country. Whatever individual or nation accepts the commandments of God becomes eligible for His grace.

1. Grammatically, the word صِبْغَة *sibghah* is used here as an object. It is a rule in Arabic Grammar that whenever somebody is required to be induced to do a thing, the verb is omitted and only the object is mentioned. Thus, the sentence means

best course for them was to accept the religion which God wished them to embrace and thus become obedient to Him (v. 139).

In conclusion, the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) is commanded to say to the people of the Book that they should not question God's choice in sending His revelation to him, because He is the God of the Muslims quite as much as theirs, and that He knew the deeds of both (v. 140). Then it is enquired of them how

وَالْأَسْبَاطُ كَانُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى قُلْ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمِ اللّٰهُ وَمَنْ
 أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَتَمَ شَهَادَةً عِنْدَهُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ وَمَا اللّٰهُ بِغَافِلٍ
 عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ۝ تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَ
 لَكُمْ مَّا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝

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wal-asbāṭa kānū Hūdān au Naṣārā; qul a-'antum a'lamu amillāh; wa man aẓlamu mimman katama shahādatan 'inda hū minallāh; wa mallāhu bi.ghāfilin 'ammā ta'malūn.

142. *Tilka ummatun qad khalat, la hū mī kasabat wa la kum mī kasabtum, wa lā tus'alūna 'ammā kānū ya'malūn.*

141. What! say ye 'Verily, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and his children were Jews or Christians'? Say, Know ye better, or Allāh? And who is more unjust than he who conceals the testimony that he has from Allāh, and Allāh is not unmindful of what ye do.'

142. This is a people that "has passed away; for them is what they earned, and for you shall be what ye earn; and ye shall not be questioned as to what they did.'

1. Some short-sighted men are so fondly attached to their own views that they ascribe them to every righteous servant of God without any evidence. In their discussions, the Jews, and the Christians too, used to represent even those of their ancestors who lived before the founders of their religions, as the followers of their own faiths, so that the excellence of their respective religions might be manifested. God says that it is a stupidity, because the Pentateuch shows that those prophets lived even before Moses, not to mention Christ. How then could they regard those prophets as Jews or Christians? By calling them Jews or Christians they belied their own scriptures.

This is not the case with the ignorant masses alone, but sometimes even well-informed people fall a prey to this delusion. In reply to the objection: 'If salvation is inseparably bound up with faith in the Atonement, then what about the righteous people

who had gone before Christ and had never talked or heard of him?' no less exalted a personage than the Principal of a well-known Divinity College in India replied that all the prophets and righteous people of pre-Christian days were saved through faith in the Atonement of Christ. This view is no less ridiculous than that of the Jews and the Christians of the Holy Prophet's days. Even now a large majority of Jews and Christians will be found to be the dupes of this error.

2. That is, those people lived in the days gone by, therefore, the Jews and the Christians could not make them share their mistakes? They are responsible for their actions, and those people were answerable for theirs. It is needless, therefore, on their part to make them partners with them in their errors and it is enough for them to establish that they are following a right line of conduct.

Abraham and his children would fare, if salvation was monopolised by the Christians or the Jews. If they replied that they were also Jews or Christians, it would be against their scriptures, which declared them as belonging to the pre-Mosaic times (v. 141).

In the end, they are once more warned against relying upon the deeds of those people who had gone before, but are required to think of their own end, because the deeds of those prophets or the sufferings of Christ could not be of any avail to them. They would be called upon to give an account of their own actions (v. 142).

